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THE

DRAMATIC CENSOR;

OR,

CRITICAL COMPANION.

———Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti : si, non, his utere mecum.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BELL, near *Exeter Exchange*, in the *Strand*;
and C. ETHERINGTON, at *York*.

M DCC LXX.

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THE
DRAMATIC CENSOR

dedicates with esteem and respect, this

SECOND VOLUME

of humble Criticisms

to the

LIBERALITY of SENTIMENT,

ORIGINALITY of GENIUS,

AFFLUENCE of CONCEPTION,

PLEASANTRY of EXPRESSION,

WIT, HUMOUR, and INSTRUCTIVE SATIRE,

which so peculiarly unite to ornament the

private and public character of

Samuel Foote, Esq;

ANALYTICAL INDEX

1. The first part of the index is devoted to a list of the names of the authors of the works included in the index. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and each name is followed by a list of the titles of the works which it has written. The titles are also arranged in alphabetical order, and each title is followed by a list of the names of the libraries or individuals to whom the work is loaned.

2. The second part of the index is devoted to a list of the titles of the works included in the index. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order, and each title is followed by a list of the names of the authors to whom the work is attributed. The names are also arranged in alphabetical order, and each name is followed by a list of the titles of the works which it has written.

3. The third part of the index is devoted to a list of the names of the libraries or individuals to whom the works included in the index are loaned. The names are arranged in alphabetical order, and each name is followed by a list of the titles of the works which are loaned to it. The titles are also arranged in alphabetical order, and each title is followed by a list of the names of the authors to whom the work is attributed.

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A Sincere esteem for the Drama, ardent wishes for the prosperity of the Stage, admiration of the beauties, and concern for the defects, both in composition and action, first dictated this work ; which from many flattering instances of approbation, has, we apprehend, been conducted with some share of ability, upon commendable principles : wherefore, the same plan will be pursued that we have hitherto adopted. Not one objection has been offered to our criticisms on the plays which have fallen under our notice ; as to our strictures on the performers, we have been accused by some of too much lenity, by others, of too much severity ; a few of the most inconsiderable objects mentioned, have taken great umbrage at the supposed injury done their imaginary merits ; of their ignorant, illiberal resentment we have heard, with an equal mixture of pity and contempt ; resolved neither through fear nor favour to abate the smallest particle of that critical prerogative we have assumed ; however, the most abject, discontented murderers of common sense in either house, may rail at the DRAMATIC CENSOR, secure from any trace of resentment for so doing, in this work, if as it is eagerly hoped some of the deficiencies pointed out are reformed, the ultimate view of this and the former Volume will be fulfilled.

In the wide field of observation before us, several passages and circumstances must no doubt escape, though equally deserving regard with several of those we note : however, we flatter ourselves, nothing material has

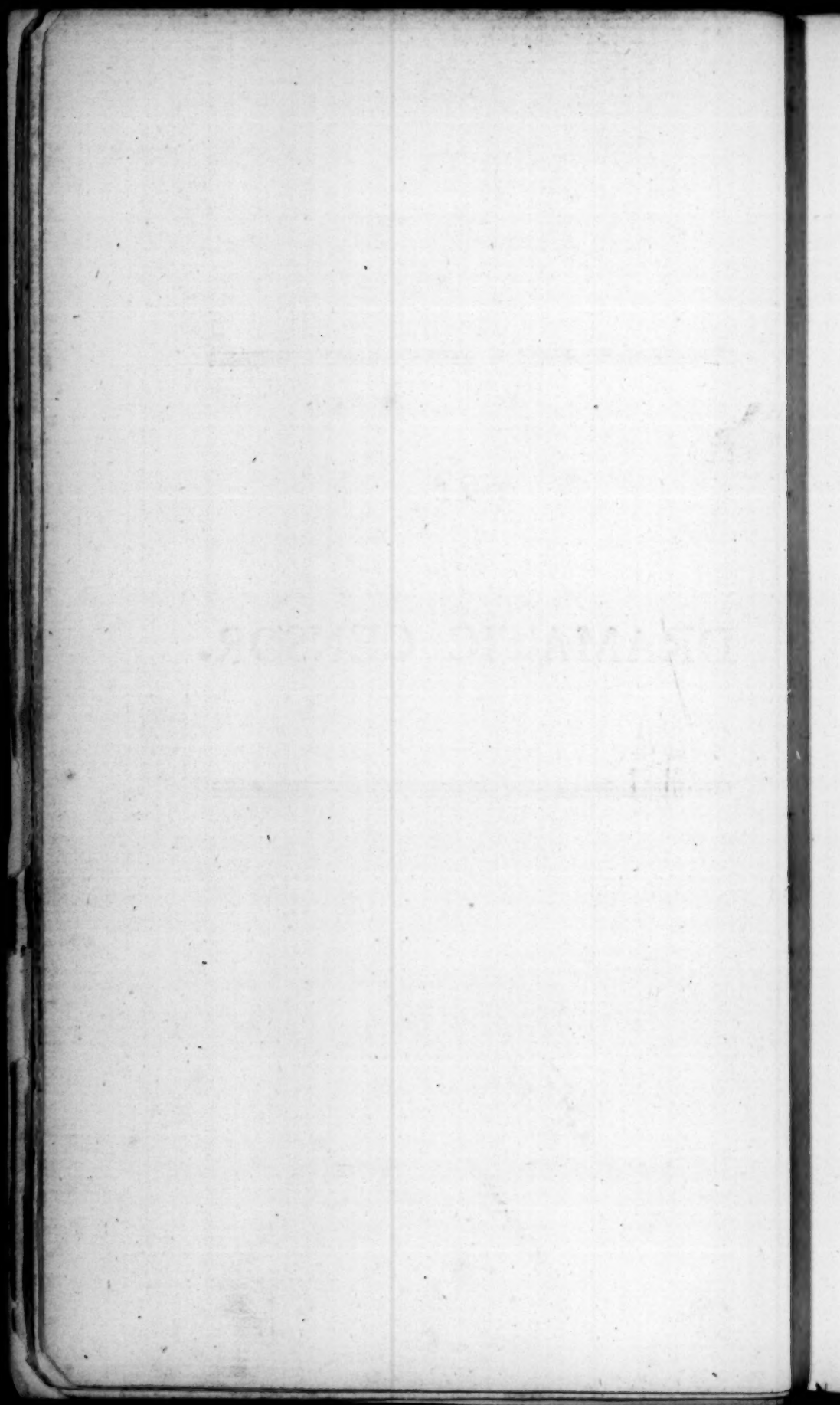
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as yet slipped us, or will hereafter be omitted ; and that a review of the work when compleated will prove, that interest and malevolence, the two worst influences authors can write under, have been equally distant both from our heads and hearts.

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JULIUS CÆSAR.

A TRAGEDY by SHAKESPEARE.

IF powerfully inculcating one of the noblest principles that actuates the human mind, the love of national liberty, can stamp additional value upon works of genius, we may venture to pronounce the tragedy now before us, as to the subject of it, highly deserving of attention from an English audience; in respect of the executive part, a review of the several scenes will, we hope, furnish a competent idea.

At the commencement of this piece, the author introduces two Romans of character and public spirit reproving the mob with great energy for making holiday on Cæsar's account, in whose ambition the freedom of their country had found a grave. The remonstrances of Marullus and Fla-

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vius are pathetically persuasive, and the mob reply with humorous, characteristic bluntness; however, we are not fond of such ludicrous matter in a tragedy, and wish the piece could have been saved from the intrusion of inadequate characters, without enervating several passages, which as they stand at present discover peculiar force.

As Cæsar goes to the Courſe he is accosted by a Soothſayer, who warns him to beware of the Ides of March, this prediction, however, he treats with contempt, and paſſes on to the games, leaving Brutus and Cassius on the stage; from the former's declining to join the public festivity, his friend takes occasion to hint a gloominess which seems to have hung for some time on his disposition; Brutus being so touched, confesses that passions of some difference cloud his mind; upon this foundation Cassius works with great subtlety to feel the pulse of his political principles; a distant shout occasions Brutus to express apprehension that the people are conferring royalty upon Cæsar, whom Cassius, in a long, spirited, and picturesque speech endeavours to depreciate, by an unfavourable comparison with himself; however, there is more of ostentatious vanity than sound argument in it, for the strength of a very brave and good man might fail in swimming, and his tongue, parched with feverish thirst, call for drink without any just imputation against his courage; the next speech of Cassius, where he accuses the Romans of enslaving themselves, and compares Brutus with Cæsar, applies closely to the point in view.

Brutus perceiving the drift of Cassius, replies with sensible reserve, but delivers one positive and noble

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noble declaration, that he would prefer a state of rural obscurity rather than confess himself a citizen of Rome, under a disgraceful state of public affairs. Here their conversation is judiciously interrupted by the return of Cæsar and his train : what the conqueror of the world says in this scene is very unimportant, and we heartily concur with BEN JOHNSON, that his quaint remark upon the leanness of Cassius deserves to be sneered at ; indeed, some good reasons for suspecting that senator of gloomy designs are subjoined, but how the author could carry Cæsar off the stage with an unessential, ridiculous remark on the deafness of one of his own ears, we cannot conceive.

In the next scene Casca, with a blunt peculiarity, informs Brutus and Cassius what happened while the people were offering Cæsar a crown ; his picture of popular vehemence, irregularity and weakness, is just and striking, but sweaty nightcaps need not have been mentioned : upon Brutus's observing that Cæsar is liable to the falling sickness, Cassius makes a most emphatic and comprehensive reply in two lines : at the conclusion of this interview, our author has, with singular judgment, given Cassius a soliloquy, which fully explains his own principles and character, while it throws some distant light on the contrast disposition of Brutus, which being generous, open and unsuspecting, Cassius justly thinks well calculated for him to work upon, thereby to gratify his personal resentment against Cæsar.

Casca and Cicero are next brought in view, alarmed at violent, elementary concussions and strange prodigies ; the descriptive part is powerful

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and poetical. When Cicero retires, ^{Julius Cæsar.} Cassius appears, who seems to rejoice in the astonishing circumstances which surround Rome, and infers from them, matters of important dependancy relative to the state : upon mention of Cæsar, as king, Cassius proclaims a resolution of never submitting to what he terms slavery ; to this Casca agrees, and hence a dawn of the conspiracy, against Cæsar breaks upon the audience ; when Cinna enters, Cassius declares him one of his faction : Brutus being mentioned as a most desirable addition to the party, Cassius gives some papers calculated for that purpose, and directs how they may be thrown in the way of Brutus's observation ; with which preparative circumstances, and a short, but energetic elogium on the popularity of Brutus, the first act properly and agreeably concludes.

Brutus is introduced at the beginning of the second act, as meditating by star-light ; and his soliloquy respecting Cæsar's greatness, is finely imagined, especially that part of it which touches on ambition. Upon Lucius's bringing some papers found in his master's study, Brutus questions him, whether to-morrow is not the Ides of March ; this, though apparently a trifling point of interrogation, must be considered as a good preparative for the death of Cæsar, which has been predicted at that time.

Upon perusal of what Lucius has brought him, he finds a dark, yet forcible insinuation, relative to the enslaved state of Rome, and his own inactivity. He explains the matter, takes the point home to himself, and with just, patriotic feeling, determines to attempt the redress of his country's wrongs :

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upon being told that Cassius and some other persons are come to wait upon him, he concludes, we think rather too hastily, that they are the conspiracy; he has reason to apprehend much public discontent, but there does not appear any foundation for his supposing an actual conspiracy is formed.

When the conspirators enter, Cassius introduces them severally, and the reception they meet is cordial. Our author manifests great judgment in communicating the matter they come upon aside, and happily threw in to fill up, the digression of where the sun rises. At the proposition of an oath to bind mutual fidelity, Brutus characteristically refuses so suspicious an obligation upon noble, generous minds, and eloquently shews why the cause alone is sufficient to bind them, or if not that, nothing can; the manner of debating who are fit for their purpose is very natural, and Brutus's objection to cutting off Antony, merely as a friend to Cæsar, heroically humane; the knowledge Decius displays of Cæsar's disposition, and the use he proposes to make of it, shew deep policy; the warning Brutus gives his friends to wear disengaged looks, is prudent: upon calling to Lucius, and perceiving that he is asleep, Brutus shews most pleasing benevolence of disposition, by leaving his boy's slumber undisturbed.

Introducing Portia, though what she says cannot affect an audience much, is judicious, as it is a relief to the other scenes, and approaches the pathetic, though it cannot touch the tender feelings. Her method of sounding the care which lies heavy on him, and his method of declining an explanation, are sensibly natural; however, to soften the present reserve,

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reserve, he promises future information, and sends her off to make way for a visitant, Caius Ligarius, with whom a very unimportant conference ensues, which we think is left out and properly in the representation.

Cæsar appears next in his palace, evidently alarmed at the turbulence of the preceding night, and orders the priests to do present sacrifice; Calphurnia approaches, filled with dreadful apprehensions, and by drawing a strong picture of those prodigies which have been recounted to her, endeavours to dissuade Cæsar from going to the capitol; however, he seems to treat omens with sensible contempt, and even rejects the unfavourable opinion of the Augurs; at last, Calphurnia's tender remonstrances prevail, and he consents that Antony shall acquaint the senate with his resolution not to go.

Matters thus circumstanced, Decius Brutus appears, as being deputed to solicit Cæsar's appearance at the capitol, which, after some refusal, by touching Cæsar's vanity, and alarming him with the imputation of fear, he works him up to go; the rest of the conspirators coming to attend him, he resolves to accompany them, and proposes previous refreshment, which occasions Brutus to make a most beautiful reflection on Cæsar's unsuspecting mind, and their own fatal dissimulation.

That every like is not the same, oh Cæsar!

The heart of Brutus yearns to think upon.

In the next scene we meet Artemidorus, a soothsayer, perusing a paper designed for Cæsar, wherein he warns that monarch of all the conspirators by name. Portia, anxious for the great event depending,

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ing, comes on in a state of very natural confusion, dispatching Lucius for intelligence ; her disjointed manner of speaking is well imagined ; upon questioning Artemidorus, she collects fresh fear of a discovery, and retires confessing the full force of womanish apprehensions.

The third act opens with Cæsar entering the senate, when he is addressed by Artemidorus, who urges attention to the paper he offers, as being of near concern to himself, which Cæsar therefore very nobly declines, as being least worthy of present regard ; those doubts which SHAKESPEARE has furnished the conspirators with, are naturally the consequence of feelings concerned in such an important and precarious undertaking.

When Metellus kneeling adulates Cæsar with multiplied titles, the monarch replies like a truly great man, but uses some terms too much in the bashaw stile ; upon the repeated solicitations of different senators to favour Cimber's suit, he well describes and manifests his own firmness ; upon his confirmed refusal, Casca, according to appointment, gives the first stab, upon which all the rest follow his blow, and the world's great conqueror falls beneath a multitude of wounds, seeming to disdain every messenger of fate, but that sent by Brutus ; here our author's judgment deserves great praise, in giving Cæsar no more to say than history authorizes ; but after speaking English through every scene and speech before, why he should introduce *et tu Bruté* is not so obvious as might be wished.

The exultation of the conspirators, and the methods they propose for reconciling this great, unthought of event to the people, are well conceived ;
however

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however we may applaud the glorious impulse of patriotism which caused Brutus to sacrifice so sincere and powerful a friend to the liberties of his country, yet we heartily concur with Mr. POPE, that the speech concerning dipping their hands in Cæsar's blood, is much more suitable to any other conspirator than him.

SHAKESPEARE was judiciously fond of realizing mimic representation as much as possible, for which purpose the following lines in this piece were certainly and happily intended.

How many ages hence,
Shall this our lofty scene be acted o'er
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown ;
How many times shall Cæsar bleed in sport,
Who now on Pompey's basis lies along,
No worthier than the dust.

Antony's servant, in a very plausible stile, offers from his master conciliating motives to the conspirators, who promise him safety for his appearance ; he is introduced much too soon, as there are but three lines from the servant's going till he comes on, which must oblige us to imagine him waiting at the door, where he would by no means have trusted himself, after he had fled to his house amazed, without some credible assurance of protection.

When Mark Antony enters he follows an amiable, natural impulse, which directs him to pay his first regard to the dead body of his royal friend, without even casting a glance at his surrounding murderers ; his address to those real or pretending patriots is pathetic and spirited, Brutus's reply cordial and sensible ; there is something hypocritical, yet politic,

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politic, in shaking hands with the blood-stained conspirators, the action lessens him in our esteem, yet the design, which may be easily perceived, commands our approbation. Cassius pinching him close, he makes a second serious declaration of attachment to the popular party, which rather lays him low in the view of truth, but to be upon a level with rogues, especially those in power, integrity must become flexible, and sometimes submit to wear a mask.

Antony's desire of leave to pronounce Cæsar's funeral elogium, strikes even slow perception with a more extensive meaning than is expressed, which Cassius very prudently adverts to; however, Brutus gives a reason, favouring of self-sufficiency, why it is not dangerous to give Antony the privilege of the rostrum; therefore consigns Cæsar's corpse to his care, only reserves to himself the first opportunity of speaking to the people: this point being settled, the conspirators retire, and leave Antony to vent his feelings more at large, which he does in a very masterly soliloquy, admirably suited to his situation. Upon the appearance of a messenger from Octavius Cæsar, he warns the young Prince to avoid the danger of entering Rome in so critical a state of affairs, mentions the trial he intends to make of popular affection, and then goes off with his imperial master's body.

Brutus, attended by the Plebeians, next strikes our view, he mounts the rostrum, and dispatches Cassius to divide the multitude; in his address to those who stay to hear him, his oratory discovers itself in that warm glow of sentiment, that nervous, yet unadorned flow of expression, which distinguishes elo-

quence, founded upon conscious honesty: he appeals to feelings of a social, virtuous and patriotic nature; he appeals to the dullest conception, by a beautiful antithesis of his great love for Cæsar, and his superior regard for the liberties of Rome; submitting, at last, with tempered dignity, and just confidence, his part in the assassination of great Julius, to public opinion, even among the lowest class of the people; such as some of our present, smart English senators have called the *scum of the earth*. Upon Antony's approach with Cæsar's body, he, according to promise, gives place, and retires with a glorious observation, that the same weapon which stabbed his best friend, is ready to assail his own heart, if ever the public safety should require it.

Upon Antony's mounting the rostrum, it immediately occurs, that a great contrast of manner, style and argument, should be adopted; this arduous variation we hope SHAKESPEARE will appear amply qualified for upon due inspection. The Plebeians seem to have received so strong a prejudice in favour of the conspiracy from Brutus's oration, that to impress an opposite opinion, appears almost impracticable; insomuch, that upon Antony's even mentioning the name of Brutus, a jealousy of his meaning starts up amongst the mob; this circumstance is a very artful and natural preparation for what follows.

In the first speech of Antony, we discover a beautiful, yet modest elogium, upon the merits of Cæsar, mingled with ironical compliments to the conspirators, particularly Brutus; he closes it with a proper, pathetic appeal, to his own mournful feelings on the occasion, which evidently touches the

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Plebeians, and lays their hearts open to the impression he apparently wishes to work upon them. In the next speech, our orator, with deep policy, obliquely hints, that he could communicate some inflammatory intelligence, but through his respect to Brutus, declines the office; he then plays a principal engine against their prejudice, by mentioning the will of Cæsar, as a most interesting concern to them; with the true violence of mobbish spirits, they desire the will may be read, this the orator most shrewdly evades to increase their eagerness, and that it may work the more powerful effect, shews them the several wounds in Cæsar's coarse, pointing out each man who stabbed him, by name.

The piteous spectacle inflames the mob to sudden exclamations of desperate tendency; this agitation of mind Antony avails himself of, by seeming to soften their resentment, which, like an inadequate quantity of water thrown upon powerful flames, tends to make it rage the fiercer. Thus roused, he confirms their fury, by reminding them of, and reading to them Cæsar's will, wherein they find a respectful and considerable remembrance of the Roman citizens; this corroborates all preceding circumstances, and they go off, denouncing most terrible threats against the conspirators. This scene finely exhibits the mutability and inconsistency of popular affection, which an artful, plausible orator, can warp from attachment to antipathy, from the most worthy to the most worthless object of human consideration: an excellent lesson this for all states, more especially free ones.

By a servant Antony is informed of Octavius's arrival at Rome, and goes to meet him at Cæsar's

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house : after this, comes a most unessential scene, omitted in representation ; a scene without any meaning, unless from the treatment Cinna meets with : we deduce a truth, most generally known, that an enraged mob, in the midst of precipitation, will as soon sacrifice an innocent as a guilty object, so wild, so unprincipled are in general their resolutions.

At the beginning of the fourth act, we find the bloody triumvirate, Octavius, Antonius and Lepidus, consulting who shall fall the victim of their displeasure, or ambitious views, in which cruel scheme we perceive they proceed upon principles of great condescension to each other ; however, when Lepidus disappears, we find he is made a mere tool to the other two, particularly Antony ; they go off, determining to make head against the warlike preparations of Brutus and Cassius.

In the next scene Brutus appears, encamped near Sardis ; after some previous converse with Pindarus and Lucilius, by which we are informed, that he suspects a decline of friendship in Cassius ; the accused person appears, and recriminates a charge of wrong upon Brutus ; an explanation is warmly urged, when the latter prudently advises an abstracted discussion of their affairs, that their armies may not be acquainted with so important and prejudicial a dissention : for this powerful reason they retire to Brutus's tent, where the matter is resumed with great eagerness by Cassius, and maintained with much philosophical dignity by Brutus.

A money matter seems the point in dispute : Brutus, with a noble elevation of mind, expresses his contempt of sordid selfishness, and with considerable asperity,

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asperity, reproaches Cassius, not only for refusing him some supplies he had solicited, but even with venality in selling public offices ; such stinging allegations would rouse a more patient spirit than Cassius seems to have : in short, the whole scene is a powerful, beautiful, instructive contrast ; shewing the great advantage cool deliberation of mind has over intemperate rashness. Their reconciliation is brought about in a very becoming manner. SHAKESPEARE, immediately after this noble interview, for what reason we cannot divine, has introduced a poet, to speak some as trifling and superfluous lines as ever were penned ; so disgraceful a rhimer is justly banished the stage.

The circumstance of Portia's death is well mentioned, and Brutus's behaviour quite characteristic ; we also much approve the short debate which arises upon marching to Philippi, as it brings to view the main story. If we could relish ghosts, Julius Cæsar's, in the tent of Brutus, would be very admissible ; in action, it certainly gives solemnity, and makes a striking conclusion to the fourth act. This ghost is introduced upon the stage, and we think very absurdly, a second time.

Antony and Octavius begin the fifth act, in the fields of Philippi ; after a few short speeches, Brutus, Cassius, and their party appear, when a parly and conference ensue ; it may perhaps be an instance of overstrained delicacy, to make an objection to what passes between the hostile leaders upon this occasion, but we apprehend the terms of reprobation they exchange, are not quite consistent with such exalted characters.

What

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What Cassius says to Messala, after Octavius and Antony go off, concerning unfavourable omens, is very preparative for the catastrophe of the piece; the parting of Brutus and Cassius, from the possibility of never meeting again, is truly pathetic, and well performed, must deeply strike every generous mind.

The battle now begins, Cassius's party gives way; unable to bear the idea of defeat, that chief, with the same precipitation of temper which has all along marked his character, determines upon death; and commands Pindarus to perform, what amongst the Romans was deemed an act of friendship, administering of fate: from what follows, it appears, that a mistake has led him into this irreparable step, which affects Titinius so much, that he puts an end to his own burthen some being with Cassius's sword. The scenes between this, and that of Brutus and his friends, after a total defeat, are very trifling; nor can we think that SHAKESPEARE has taken so much care to render his amiable hero's fall important, as he might have done: in the last scene Antony pronounces a very just and concise, yet copious eulogium upon Brutus.

The subject of this tragedy is of a very interesting nature, and its tendency singularly useful in a state like that of Great Britain. The unities are no doubt sadly mutilated, yet does it not appear in representation so irregular as it really is; the characters are very numerous, and those of any consideration, supported with great consistency.

Julius Cæsar appears possessed of such intrepidity and openness of mind, as recommend him, though the enslaver of his country, to the respect of an audience:

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audience ; as a part, there is no opportunity for an actor to display capital abilities ; the best personators of him we remember were Messrs. BRIDGWATER and SPARKS.

Brutus is a character of singular dignity, amiable in every point of view, except that violent breach of gratitude, conspiring against, and personally assailing the life of a man, who, upon most disinterested principles, had proved himself his fast friend ; this is a point of doubt, which has been often debated, and as often left undetermined : however, as the Roman idea of patriotism, not only justified, but applauded a man, even in the act of suicide, where the good of his country was essentially concerned. It may easily be admitted an established rule, to sacrifice the dearest friend, nay, the nearest relation, for the same glorious cause ; and, in this view, Brutus stands exculpated, for Cæsar's usurpation of power, most certainly broke off all social connection between him and every citizen, influenced by the principles of liberty.

After this defence, we are sorry that he appears only as a tool of Cassius's policy, in the piece before us ; his own virtue and sensibility do not possess sufficient activity to lead in the cause of patriotism, though, when roused, they join the general concern with cordiality and firmness. A mind of spotless integrity, seems to possess him through the whole ; and though there is a slight charge of weakness against him, yet there is an engaging uniformity which preserves him in our esteem while alive, and renders his fall an incident of tender concern.

Brutus requires good, but not extensive powers of representation ; a graceful figure, with full, placid

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cid articulation of voice, must, in this part, sufficiently gratify a sensible spectator. Mr. QUIN having much less monotony in Brutus than any other tragedy part, that is the verse not affording him so many opportunities for periodical cadences, he appeared more respectable, and less offensive than the buskin generally rendered him. His oration to the Plebeians had great, and his scene with Cassius very singular merit; in several other places he was heavy and insipid.

Mr. SHERIDAN, curtailed by nature of almost every favourable, adequate, external requisite, yet manifested great judgment in this character, maintaining stricter equality through the whole than Mr. QUIN; if he could not rise so high in the view of criticism, neither did he fall so low. His person, though unimportant, by the aid of dress, was not totally void of respect: but a stiff sameness of action, frequently rising to extravagance, super-added artificial to natural deficiency. SHAKESPEARE'S meaning he clearly conceived, and fully conveyed, but frequent, ungracious snip-snap breaks of voice, and a painful attempt to keep up the last syllable of every sentence, his peculiar fault, gave strong specimens of oratorical dissonance. Mr. WALKER, within these few years, made a decent shift with the part at Covent Garden; at present, there is not the slightest trace of it to be found at either house.

Cassius is in every respect a striking contrast to Brutus; an enemy to Cæsar rather from envy and private pique, than public spirited principles: proud, impatient, subtle, irascible, without any kind of virtue, but the military one of courage, to commend

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commend him ; yet from some spirited and plausible declarations in the cause of freedom, an audience are induced to view him as a more valuable object than he really is, and though his fall appears to be an unjustifiable effect of impetuosity, yet we are apt to lament it.

As a part, the representation of Cassius is more difficult, and requires much greater powers of expression than Brutus ; however, this is to be remarked, that an indifferent actor can much more easily catch applause from an injudicious audience in the former, than the latter ; indeed, if two capital performers, of equal merit, present themselves to the public in these characters, the odds are great but Cassius outstrips his competitor in noisy approbation. In the course of our theatrical observation, we recollect but one good Cassius, Mr. RYAN ; the techy degree of passion described in this part, and the general mode of mind which actuates it, he hit off in a very characteristic manner. Mr. Mos-sop, in attempting this fiery Roman, shewed much power, but very little nature ; and every other candidate we have seen sunk below contempt ; he is, like Brutus, so unhappily situated, as not to have the shadow of a representative at either theatre,

Casca's cynical roughness was admirably described by Mr. SPARKS, nor did he sustain much injury from Mr. RIDOUT's abilities ; yet even this conspirator would find but indifferent support from any existing son of the buskin.

From the outlines of Mark Antony's character, as drawn not only by his friend Cæsar, but the conspirators also, we should be apt to deem him a mere trifling, unimportant reveller ; yet, when circum-

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stances call for serious attention, we perceive him to be a very shrewd, plausible and deep politician ; a persuasive orator, an active and resolute soldier : his manner of working up the Plebeians is masterly, and shews a thorough knowledge of life.

Mr. BARRY, beyond a doubt, stands foremost in our approbation for this part, as possessing a very adequate figure, an harmonious voice, and all the plausibility of insinuation that SHAKESPEARE meant ; however, we think that critic an enthusiastic admirer, who, speaking of him in the rostrum, exclaimed, that Paul never preached so well at Athens. It is certain, nature in this, as well as all his dramatic undertakings, furnished him with almost irresistible recommendations ; but judgment did not seem so much his friend as might have been wished. Mr. DIGGES figured, and imagined the part extremely well, but wanted that flow of voice essential to smooth oratory. Mr. DEXTER was pretty and inoffensive, but very faint and lukewarm. Mr. ROSS stands next to what Mr. BARRY was, and has it in his power to make a very estimable Antony ; but with respect to the stage, this gentleman's inclination and abilities seldom accompany each other.

As to the long, &c. of male characters in this tragedy, they are not worth regard ; and as to the ladies, all we can say of them is, that Mrs. WOFFINGTON, in Portia, deserved more notice than any other lady we have seen.

To differ with great men, or established opinions, is rather hazardous ; however, we must venture to blame Dr. JOHNSON's feelings, which consider this piece as cold and unaffecting ; we readily admit there is a total want of those tender passions which
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are essential to move and please female spectators, which prevents it from commanding that success on the stage it deserves: however, we are hardy enough to contend, that the subject is truly interesting, that the thoughts are noble and instructive, the versification suitable, the orations happily contrasted, the characters well preserved; and that the whole together resembles a beautiful fabric, which in general strikes with singular satisfaction, in spite of some small irregularities and blemishes which appear: had the fifth act been adequate to the other four, we should not hesitate to pronounce SHAKESPEARE'S JULIUS CÆSAR, a very capital ornament to the stage, and a most desirable companion in the closet; containing many passages and circumstances which may improve, not one which can taint the mind.]



SCHOOL for RAKES.

A COMEDY. ANONYMOUS.

BY a conversation between Frampton and Willes, at the beginning of this comedy, we find, that Sir William Evans, a Welch baronet, and his family, are arrived at the town-house of Lord Eustace; and from what occurs, especially from what Willis lets fall, we may infer that they are not very agreeable guests; the baronet's daughter Harriet is mentioned, and some design, relative to her, dawns upon us: the pertness of a valet, buoyed up by a master's confidence, is well described in this scene; and the insults a dependant upon quality is liable to, equally well set forth.

Frampton, who appears a man of principle and sensibility, though by a decay of circumstances reduced to humour and assist the licentious pursuits of a dissipated young nobleman, in a very rational soliloquy, after Willis retires, reflects upon his painful situation, but expresses some satisfaction, that he has escaped an iniquitous affair then on the tapis, and goes off with a commendable resolution, not to abandon his patron, while surrounded with perplexities, nor to assist him further than honour and peace of mind allow.

Sir William Evans, his sister Winifred, and daughter Harriet, as fresh from a journey, next appear: the baronet seems displeased at his lordly host, but is rallied by his sister for not having notions of politeness

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liteness and family consequence equal to her own ; he seems loth to incur obligations ; she considers an interchange of civilities as none. Their altercation subsiding, Sir William addresses himself to Harriet, who appears unexpectedly thoughtful and grave, which, being questioned, she attributes to fatigue ; however, a small intimation is dropped aside, signifying, that the house without its owner, cannot be very agreeable to her.

Mrs. Winifred's desire that all their acquaintance should know of the intimacy with Lord Eustace, is a well applied stroke of satire against the ridiculous admirers of elevated stations.

Upon the baronet's mentioning a design of visiting Captain Lloyd, the maiden lady expresses great apprehensions at the gentleman's coming to Lord Eustace's ; this Sir William is surprized at, the captain being uncle to the person intended for Miss Harriet's husband ; here a fresh altercation arises between the brother and sister, which is terminated by the former going on his proposed visit to Captain Lloyd. When the baronet disappears, Winifred drops a piece of information, by which we learn, that her niece's hand is already disposed of, and therefore beyond the father's power. Here Miss Harriet appears, and from what passes between the young lady and her aunt, we perceive that the former entertains uneasy sensations for two reasons first, that her marriage is concealed from the baronet, and next that her husband has not been in town to receive them ; from which last cause she draws some disagreeable doubts of his constancy. This delicate agitation of mind, Mrs. Winifred endeavours to compose, by descanting on her noble connection,

nection, her supporters, coronets, &c. Robin acquaints Harriet that Mr. Frampton desires to speak to her, the ladies go off to meet him immediately in the parlour.

Frampton, in two short soliloquies, previous to the appearance of the ladies, intimates a strong uneasiness of mind at a business he has in hand, and makes this just, instructive remark, that it is the lowest, we may add the most cruel baseness, to be capable of admiring, and betraying an innocent young creature in the same moment.

From the succeeding scene we learn, that the illness of Lord Eustace's father has been the cause of that absence which Harriet takes unkindly; Frampton delivers a very plausible exculpation of his friend, and expressing a hope of his speedy arrival, the ladies go off to mend their external appearance against my lord's approach.

Frampton is now again in soliloquy, which Lord Eustace interrupts by his approach; a conversation ensues between the friends, which plainly shews, that Lord Eustace has sensibility to know that he acts upon very culpable principles, respecting Harriet; especially by drawing her into a feigned marriage, and wanting to cast her off. Frampton's remonstrances are candid, persuasive and well applied; among other points of perplexity, Lord Eustace expresses strong apprehension that his villainy will be discovered to Sir William Evans and family, by the compunction of a steward who is dying, and has declared an intention of confessing his own guilt, in acting the part of a clergyman. To defeat the chance of a letter from this man reaching improper hands, Lord Eustace desires that Frampton

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ton may stay in the house, and take care that all letters are first brought to him; Frampton remarks, that it is an irksome and hateful undertaking, but having promised, he seems willing to give all possible assistance towards preventing a discovery; Lord Eustace expresses a desire of seeing Harriet, but Frampton, for prudential reasons, dissuades him, and the first act concludes here with some just remarks on the essential, preparatory grounds of amendment in tainted minds; indeed, this entire scene may be called a good, agreeable lesson of moral and social instruction.

Lord Eustace begins the second act, ruminating on his own disagreeable situation, and the pride of family, which reduces him to such a dilemma; Robert, as messenger, acquaints him that the ladies are approaching; after a few lines Harriet appears, and with a very natural eagerness of mind, approaches to embrace the man she considers as her husband; but from a sudden check of delicacy stops short, and discovers marks of confusion for having appeared so forward: Lord Eustace questions the cause of her timidity, and upon Mrs. Winifred's entrance immediately after, apologizes for his absence at the time of their arrival in town; the old lady grants her excuse with great readiness; Harriet, however, cannot shake off her concern entirely, which occasions her aunt to make some tart observations on such unbecoming behaviour.

A proposal is made to Lord Eustace, of opening the marriage affair to Sir William, and Mrs. Winifred's kind interposition is solicited, but having promised his lordship to maintain secrecy, she goes off, determined to fulfil the treaty, as she phrases it, and
leaves

leaves the young couple to a tete-a-tete, wherein Harriet continues to urge unfolding the matter to her father; this encreases his lordship's embarrassment much, from which he at length makes a temporary escape, by suggesting a design of going into the country, on pretence of joining his regiment, and promising that he will there comply with her request. On being questioned why in his letters to Harriet he has never stiled her wife, the danger of discovery by his father, Lord Delville, is urged as a reason, and thus the tender, believing, deceived lady, is quieted for the present.

Mrs. Winifred re-enters hastily, and announces the approach of her brother Sir William, who speaks at his entrance some rough but sensible truths against the prevalence of luxury; after making some just remarks on the general relaxation of military duty, and the partial indulgence that is shewn to officers of quality in particular, the baronet comments upon his daughter's evident alteration, and unusual depression of spirits; being interrupted upon that point by Mrs. Winifred, he passes on to the report of Lord Eustace's approaching marriage, as set forth in one of the public papers. At this unexpected piece of intelligence, Harriet very naturally takes an alarm, while Mrs. Winifred treats the matter with contempt; Lord Eustace puts a good face on the affair, laughs at news-paper information, and observes, that it is one consequence of the liberty of the press, for paragraph-writers to marry couples who have scarce seen each other; however, he admits some grounds for the report relative to himself, as Lord Delville had expressed great liking to Lady Ann Mountfort's large

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large fortune. Sir William, in his rough stile, comments upon the unnecessary pains of explanation Lord Eustace has taken, as not thinking the matter of any concern to him or his family. An engagement of business calling the young lord away, he goes off, soliciting leave to visit the ladies, which is granted. We think the request a little odd, and imagine the author forgot that the Evans's were lodged in his lordship's house.

Mrs. Winifred, after chiding her niece for encouraging groundless apprehensions, dips into her favourite theme politics, and by displaying gross absurdity, stands before us a severe satire upon those who busy themselves with concerns out of their sphere, and quite beyond their conception.

Sir William re-entering with Robert, questions him first about my lord's valet, who is said to be a very useful creature in his way ; and next concerning Frampton, of whom Robert can say no more than he believes him honest, because Willis does not like him. Towards the end of this conversation, with his trusty domestic, the baronet declares he will leave town in a few days, and that his only remaining care is the marriage of his daughter Harriet with Colonel Lloyd, which he determines shall soon take place.

Frampton and Willis next claim our attention, the latter giving an arch account to the former of the precautionary orders left by Lord Eustace, to watch close and exclude all Sir William's friends. In the course of this interview, Willis gives his tongue several pert liberties respecting Harriet, which occasions Frampton to check him with becoming spirit ; an account of Captain Lloyd's con-

nection with Lord Eustace, and the foundation of it occurs, when a knocking at the door calls off Willis ; Frampton is left to meditate alone ; what he utters is to the purpose, and has force, but we could wish this gentleman had not been loaded with such a number of soliloquies ; however, his views being worthy a man of honour, every good, tender mind must sympathize with and applaud him.

We are now introduced to Sir William and Harriet, he appears to be engaging his daughter's approbation of Colonel Lloyd as a husband ; Robert mentions the approach of Captain Lloyd, and the blunt tar enters close at his heels ; after a short compliment, he complains of some difficulty he had in getting to his friends, and in the sea phrase says, he was near tacking about, had not Robert, by clearing the deck of my lord's impertinent valet, got convenient entrance. Upon pointing out the ladies as his sister and daughter, Lloyd ludicrously replies to Sir William, that they are much altered since last he saw them, one being grown a young, and the other an old woman ; the latter part of this observation affecting Mrs. Winifred, she retorts upon the captain rather churlishly, by remarking, that he is not *grown* a brute, for he has always been one ; this seems the prelude to an altercation of some bitterness, but the captain gives it a turn, by asking for Sir William's son, the young colonel, who, by his account, has made a slip to London from his quarters in Ireland, and therefore, to screen the affair, has changed his name to Weston ; this intelligence, with the additional hint that some female has occasioned his journey, ruffles Sir William.

A fresh

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A fresh point of debate arising between the captain and Mrs. Winifred, Lord Eustace is mentioned, with whom they both claim a particular intimacy ; his lordship's approaching marriage being again spoken of, Harriet feels a fresh alarm, which her aunt endeavours to suppress ; but Captain Lloyd's declaration that he has seen the equipage, jewels, liveries, &c. preparatory to the wedding, the young lady's fears appear confirmed, and her confusion proportionably rises, till at last mention being made of some easy, country girl, who has been made a fool of by Lord Eustace, she loses every trace of resolution, and faints ; this puts her father into a flurry of spirits, she is conducted off by Mrs. Winifred, Captain Lloyd goes in search of the colonel ; and Sir William, in a soliloquy, which concludes the second act, endeavours to account for this sudden and extraordinary emotion ; however, he shoots wide of the real mark, and might as well have said nothing, but for the following remark, which is very pregnant with truth and good sense. " The foibles of youth should rather be counteracted than opposed, lest in endeavouring to weed them out, we may destroy a kindred virtue."

Frampton begins the third act with a few unessential lines before Willis comes on with some letters he has intercepted ; the voluble valet paints his own political dexterity in pleasant, spirited terms, and seems to urge a claim of reward for his assiduity very home to Frampton, who considering him as a kind of villainous, though necessary utensil, dismisses him the room in pretty rough terms, after securing the letters, which latter circumstance Willis seems to regret, and goes off grumbling deeply.

F 2

Frampton

Frampton now again soliloquizes, and entertains us with exculpatory meditation respecting himself, as intermeddling with the dishonourable purposes of Lord Eustace, and to relieve his mind resolves upon delivering the letters to Sir William ; at which crisis Lord Eustace enters to him, enquiring eagerly if he has secured those letters ; this draws on a full and emphatic explanation of Frampton's sentiments, wherein the breach of hospitality, as well as common civility, is charged home against his lordship, who offers no palliation but the necessity of his situation, and warmly desires to see the letters ; this Frampton commendably evades, and baits him with several instructive reproaches ; the young peer replies in a stile of warm sarcasm, and the matter rises to such a pitch, that Frampton resigns his charge, and renounces his lordship's friendship, finding it must be held on unworthy terms, and retires.

Willis now comes forward, full of expectation to work on his noble master's weakness for the reward of his diligence, but Frampton's speedy and unexpected return interrupts his design ; he is ordered out of the room, and a fresh conversation between Lord Eustace and Frampton ensues, wherein the latter shews a very delicate sensibility for his patron's perplexed situation, and impresses him with a strong idea of his own misconduct ; this produces a great concession from his lordship, and a cordial reconciliation is the consequence ; it is also resolved, that all Sir William's letters, save that from Langwood, the dying steward, shall be delivered him, for this purpose they are delivered to Willis.

When his lordship and Frampton retire, the active valet, with a true spirit of intrigue, determines

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mines to see what the important, excepted letter contains; and fiddling about the seal, breaks it before he is aware. This rather alarms him, but a gratification of his curiosity softens the accident, and he explores the contents with some laughable observations, drawing favourable hopes of advantage from the discovery he has made.

Harriet is next discovered alone, expressing much love for, with painful doubts of Lord Eustace; entering upon so solemn an obligation, in direct breach of official duty, adds to her irksome sensations. Sir William enters upon her meditation, and shews a letter he has received from her brother, confirming Captain Lloyd's insinuation, that a lady is the cause of his visiting London. Speaking of his son's matrimonial views, the baronet utters a sentiment every parent should invariably adopt, that worth and virtue are superior to every consideration of fortune. Strong marks of melancholly still hanging upon Harriet's countenance, her tender father wants to come at the cause, which again brings Lord Eustace under consideration; the subject works so strongly upon the young lady, that she astonishes Sir William with falling at his feet, and works him into strong perplexity by soliciting, in broken sentences, his pardon, for having become Lord Eustace's wife without his knowledge. This circumstance deeply impresses the old man, whose good sense perceives a strong objection, his lordship's dissipated, licentious disposition, which cannot afford the prospect of much conjugal felicity. Harriet, however, pursues her tender solicitation, and urges some exculpatory arguments in her lord's favour, which work the wished for effect, and obtain Sir William's forgiveness;

giveness ; this sends off the young lady in perfect harmony of spirits.

By the scene which immediately follows between Sir William and Robert, we learn, that the latter has made some disagreeable observations, and even heard of the imposition which has been passed upon Harriet. This distracting explanation rouses the baronet, who hearing that Willis is confidante, orders Robert to call him : upon the valet's appearance he is at first questioned mildly, then with a degree of intimidating warmth, concerning Lord Eustace's marriage ; he hesitates for some time, but having a sword pointed to his breast, and fancying Sir William has had information from Langwood, pulls the letter Frampton had charged him to secrete from his pocket, which the baronet snatches ; after puzzling each other for a few speeches longer, the valet, terrified for what he has done, makes a confused and laughable retreat.

Here Sir William, resolving to have a further explanation, after reading the fatal letter, calls for his sister and daughter, who both appear on the instant ; he immediately pronounces the deceit, which overpowers Harriet, and gives Langwood's letter to Mrs. Winifred, who, with her usual self-sufficiency, considers it as a false, forged affair ; and seems to wonder that her brother can be so easily imposed upon. This but enflames the baronet's passion more, and causes him, after some stinging reproaches vented against his daughter, to hurry off the stage.

Harriet, in the midst of her confusion, proposes to fly from Lord Eustace's dwelling, but Mrs. Winifred persisting in her opinion, that there is some imposition in the affair, advises her neice to send

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Lord Eustace a letter; this, though warmly urged, is obstinately refused, so that when Harriet retires to avoid further importunity, the aunt determines to write herself; and though some doubts respecting Lord Eustace intrude upon her, yet she cherishes the comfortable idea, that he dare not deceive her, or, if he does, that the ap Evans's are not to be injured with impunity.

At the beginning of the fourth act, a new character is presented to us, Colonel Evans. In the conversation between him and Captain Lloyd, the latter, after blaming young Evans for leaving his regiment so abruptly on a woman's account, apologizes in some measure for the indiscretion, by telling what influence a Donna Isabella at Gibraltar, had once like to have gained over himself; after this, the talkative tar enquires minutely into the circumstances of the colonel's fair one, to which he only obtains the general reply, that she is young, handsome, and of rank above her admirer's expectation; exposition of her name is declined. After these gentlemen disappear, who, in our opinion, have said nothing any way essential to the piece, nor much to place them in esteem with an audience, Mrs. Winifred and Robert appear, when she receives further proof of Lord Eustace's treachery. After a few lines, she dispatches the honest domestic to watch a private door in the garden; here Sir William joins his sister, who wants to argue matters with him, but his temper of mind not suiting her purpose, he at first answers rather churlishly; however, she forces her discourse on him, and proposes to try her influence and Harriet's tears upon Lord Eustace. This design the baronet treats with contempt, and thereby

thereby irritates his vain sister ; besides, with becoming pride, he disdains the thought of his daughter's suing so base a man. Another thought arises in Mrs. Winifred's prolific brain, that as Lord Eustace has a place at court, Sir William should complain of him to the king ; this romantic idea produces some just compliments to virtuous royalty, but Sir William casts so ineffectual a proceeding aside, and determines upon taking personal satisfaction, with which spirited resolution he withdraws.

Another very immaterial soliloquy occurs here, at the end of which Robert appears, and informs Winifred, that he has heard the private door in the garden unlocked, this hurries her off to prevent Lord Eustace's meeting her enraged brother.

Colonel Evans, who as we find has been assaulted by footpads, enters with Lord Eustace, by whom he has been rescued ; thanks are returned for the service. By a conversation which ensues, we find, that upon being told the title of his deliverer, Colonel Evans looks on him as a rival in the affections of Lady Ann Mountfort ; a meeting is proposed, but declined, as each of the gentlemen is otherwise particularly engaged : Lord Eustace partly unfolds his critical situation with Harriet, but as her name is not mentioned, the colonel remains ignorant that she is his sister.

The next scene Mrs. Winifred brings on Harriet, when Lord Eustace immediately enters, and endeavours to sooth that heavy concern which hangs on the young lady ; for some time the aunt harangues him on the charge of infidelity, which he evades with tolerable effrontery, but is reduced to a painful dilemma upon her producing Langwood's letter ;

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however, he professes an honest design, dictated by ardent love, in the clandestine marriage effected him; this strikes Mrs. Winifred with the pleasing hopes of repairing every thing, and she goes off to prevent Sir William from coming abruptly upon the young couple, as they seem to be in a fair train of reconciliation; but this female politician appears much out in her calculation, for Harriet's offended virtue and delicacy remain inexorable to entreaty, and she retires, disclaiming every idea of connection with so unworthy a betrayer: here Sir William enters, full of the injury done him through his daughter, and a very warm altercation ensues, which is supported on Lord Eustace's side with as much decent spirit as the circumstances will admit; to Sir William's violent decision, he very properly opposes his own consciousness of error, which is a sufficient reason why courage should not exert itself against an injured person; however, the baronet's persisting in aggravation, compels him at last to accept the challenge, in consequence of which, a meeting is appointed at eight o'clock the next morning, with seconds.

After Sir William has expressed satisfaction that his son the colonel is absent, as this affair of the duel must have fallen upon him, Mrs. Winifred bolts in, and accuses her brother of turning matters topsyturvy; she also mentions Harriet's haughty refusal, which seems to give the old gentleman singular satisfaction. His sister's wish for being attached to nobility at any rate, gives rise to some pertinent reflections upon the mingled pride and meanness which mark her character; Sir William treats her notions with asperity and contempt, and then hastes to

comfort Harriet, whose rejection of Lord Eustace, has replaced her in his favour. Mrs. Winifred, in a high miss at the slight she has received, wants to assert her own infallibility, by casting the blame of what has happened upon others, and concludes, with applying to herself Lord Chatham's declaration, of not being accountable for measures that she is not suffered to guide.

Lord Eustace and Frampton begin the fifth act, conferring on the unlucky circumstance of the former having met Sir William, and the challenge consequential to it, which Frampton sensibly observes, ought not to be fulfilled; however, Lord Eustace solicits him to act as a second, which for substantial reasons he denies. Marriage of Harriet is urged as a palliative, but the young peer dreads an imputation of cowardice. Upon Frampton's absolute denial to be concerned, Lord Eustace requests his delivery of a letter, in case he should fall, to his father, and goes off to search a less scrupulous friend to act as a second. Frampton descants some time on the contrariety of Lord Eustace's disposition, and goes off, resolved to avert, if possible, those perils which hang over his head.

Harriet, accompanied by her aunt, gives vent to an unequalled, and apparently incurable perplexity of mind, occasioned not only by the baseness of her supposed husband, but by the impending duel, which she urges Mrs. Winifred to prevent at any rate, for which purpose the old lady retires just as Sir William appears: he perceives Harriet's concern, and tenderly tries to soften her, but endangering his life on her account, prevents the desired effect; as the baronet will not relax those strict notions of honour, which

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which urge him on to so desperate a mode of satisfaction.

Captain Lloyd's approach occasions the afflicted Harriet to retire ; we find that the captain has been summoned to act as Sir William's second ; to this end the baronet acquaints him with the duel he is engaged in ; a circumstance which draws from the son of Neptune some whimsical remarks on fighting, for which he seems to have a very good stomach, but thinks breakfast an essential preparative. This causes Sir William to take him into another room, and leaves the stage open for Lord Eustace, who comes on with Colonel Evans, as his second.

By what drops from the colonel, we find, his lordship, through romantic notions of justice, has determined to stand Sir William's fire, without returning it. At the same instant, Harriet and her father enter at opposite doors, the colonel is immediately saluted with the titles of son and brother, but is reproved as appearing the abettor of that man who has disgraced his sister ; this young Evans disclaims, and treats Harriet with rough contempt ; then takes the quarrel upon himself, and gives Lord Eustace a regular challenge, which, upon finding Harriet's innocence, he seems more warmly bent to enforce. As he and Lord Eustace are going off, Frampton enters, who, hearing Harriet exclaim, " when will my miseries end," replies, " I hope this moment, madam." This dawning of an eclairsissement occasions surprize in all the parties, and enquiries of what he means ; when he declares, that he has been with, and is just come from Lord Delville, who approves Harriet for a daughter-in-law, and has charged him with a letter to Sir Wil-

liam Evans upon that subject. This letter being perused, the baronet pronounces it a mark of honour in the old peer, yet says it cannot atone for the misconduct of his son Lord Eustace; this starts a fresh difficulty, which however is removed by a declaration, that Lady Anne Mountfort never was an object of serious attention to Lord Eustace, and is in reality the lady whose hand is destined for Colonel Evans: hence a reconciliation and mutual congratulations ensue on all sides.

Captain Lloyd, upon seeing such an assemblage of unexpected characters, seems disappointed that the proposed engagement is not likely to take place; however, like an honest, good natured man, sympathizes in the general joy, with which the comedy concludes. But what could induce the author to tag half a dozen very indifferent lines together, by way of deducing a moral, we shall not pretend to suggest; let it suffice to say, that we could wish nature and the established mode, which rejects rhimes, had been more strictly regarded.

Upon a general view of this comedy, it appears to be written with a good intention; the dialogue has considerable ease, but not much spirit or elegance; the plot is tolerably interesting, and the scenes regularly enough disposed, but the catastrophe is rather huddled up; and the delicacy which Sir William Evans and his daughter seem so strongly possessed of, at last vanishes almost imperceptibly.

The characters, without a grain of originality, are well imagined, and supported with tolerable consistence; Lord Eustace is an odd medley of virtues and weakness, for his errors are certainly more the effect of warm passions and inadequate judgment

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ment than absolute vice ; there is a face of meanness in his proposed connection with Lady Anne, which casts a shade that rests on him, even when matters are made up. In representation, he is what performers call a tolerable walking gentleman, and is not much beyond the abilities of Mr. CAUTHERLY, who, by never attempting any thing higher, would deserve some degree of praise.

Sir William is a person of nice feelings, and a fond, without being a foolish father. Mr. HOLLAND, who was certainly better calculated for a particular cast in comedy, than any thing he ever did, or could do of a tragic nature, gave just and singular satisfaction in the Welch baronet ; since his death, Mr. HURST has undertaken him, with some degree of success, which could not happen without some merit ; though certainly the audiences of London have lately been much weaker in their judgment, or more extensive in good nature, than they were seven years ago. May the disposition continue till there is a fresh supply of intrinsic merit to stand the test of criticism.

Colonel Evans is a very immaterial object, and can never gain any credit for either author or actor ; what can be done for him in action Mr. PALMER supplies agreeably enough.

Frampton is certainly a well drawn child of nature ; one who, notwithstanding the want of prudence to preserve his circumstances in a state of comfort and respect, nevertheless has a heart which scorns, even in the midst of dependance, to flatter or promote for interest, the vices of an opulent patron ; nay, who hazards the favour of that patron by labouring to save him from himself : he is a most amiable

able agent in the piece, and should not after his essential, good offices, have been left in such an unprovided state at the conclusion. We know not any character more chastely or more agreeably performed on either of the stages than this by Mr. REDDISH, from whose expression the valuable sentiments flow with peculiar grace and sensibility.

Captain Lloyd is well designed, but underwritten, the least entertaining of any sea character on the stage, and most evidently borrowed from all who went before him; nothing but the happy conception and exquisite talents of Mr. KING, could render him so agreeable as he now appears.

Willis seems drawn with judgment and vivacity by the author; nor is the essential whim and sprightliness of representation any way deficient in Mr. DODD's very pleasing performance of this laughable and spirited valet. Mr. W. PALMER has upon emergencies made a tolerable shift.

Robert has an agreeable, blunt simplicity, and commendable honesty of character in his composition; and stood much indebted for the notice he obtained to Mr. BADDELY's characteristic naiveté of action.

Mrs. Winifred is a painful, miserable copy of Mrs. Margate Maxwell, in the DEVIL upon two STICKS: so flat, so impoverished, that Mrs. CLIVE's powerful talents alone could have rendered her bearable: poor Mrs. HOPKINS is as much asleep in the performance, as the author was in writing this part.

Harriet is a tender, sensible, delicate young lady, and in every one of those ideas received ample justice from the interesting appearance, and pathetic expression of Mrs. BADDELY.

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Being much disgusted, both in the theatre and closet with a superabundance of soliloquies in this piece, we have taken pains to count them, and find no less than twenty-two; the greatest part of which, or at least half, falls to Frampton alone; the plot must be very hard strained which requires such aid; however, the SCHOOL for RAKES, from its moral tendency, and the excellent sentiments with which in several places it is sprinkled, may be recommended as a comedy more deserving of attention, both in public and private, than many other pieces of much greater critical merit; virtue is patronized and inculcated through the whole, without being once put to the blush, or in the least degree sacrificed to applause catching humour.



The

The O R P H A N.

A TRAGEDY by OTWAY.

IF the author now before us could not lay claim to the noblest, yet he has been generally, and justly allowed some of the tenderest flights of genius that ever graced dramatic composition : his beauties are many, and those he principally derived from the liberality of nature, which had conferred feelings, conception and expression, well adapted to a subject of the queen of tears. He had also several glaring faults, but those were totally derived from the licentiousness of taste, and depravity of manners, which prevailed when he wrote ; indeed, by his life, as well as his pen, we perceive him to have been deeply tainted, but our remarks must be applied to him as a poet, not a man.

It is usual to omit the first scene of this tragedy in representation, which is a stretch of theatrical prerogative we do not altogether approve ; for though what passes between Ernesto and Paulino is not absolutely essential, yet their conversation is beyond doubt a very good introduction to the piece, better, as we apprehend, than that with which it now commences ; however we shall not give the substance of what is so little regarded, but begin with the two brothers, who being just returned from the chace, mention some danger that Castalio has been in, and then pass on to other matters, till they come at last

to

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to mention Monimia, their father's ward. The attachment of each to this young lady, occasions an appearance of disagreement between them, but a softening concession from one, draws from the other a most solemn declaration of unalterable friendship; uttered partly according to the taste of the day, in rhyme, and very little above the degree of doggrel.

When Monimia enters with the page, we soon perceive that her heart is considerably prejudiced in favour of Castalio; all her questions and observations strongly indicate it. Cordelio's replies to her questions are in an arch characteristic stile, but in one speech rather licentious; his account of what he has heard from the brothers, in regard to their love for Monimia, is distinct and natural; we think Monimia's resentment against the design of Castalio's introducing Polydore to a private conference, is very becoming; indeed, there does not seem any colour for such a paltry condescension in the former, as the latter might have gained an interview without such an introduction.

When the brothers appear, and Castalio, according to promise, stands master of the ceremonies, the lady expresses confusion; but why she should seem to entertain such dreadful, previous apprehensions of Polydore, we cannot say. Castalio's sudden, and we may add, strange departure, ruffles her extremely, and seems to be the only cause for her ungracious charge of ill gature against Polydore's countenance, even before he has spoke a word; such treatment is rather cavalier on her side, yet at first occasions no return but warm declarations of amorous passion, which are well expressed, and suitably replied to: however, when Monimia comes to a peremp-

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 tory refusal of sacrificing her honour, why she should suppose his professions dishonourable, we know not. Polydore throws off every trace of the gentleman, and shews himself the brute Monimia seems to have imagined him. His general sarcasm against the whole sex is illiberal, but not without some truth and considerable fancy; her reply is couched in very proper and strong terms: what Polydore speaks after she goes off, his allusion to the bull, &c. is almost too gross for a satyr to utter, or a Billingsgate fish-wife to hear; it is highly shameful that somewhat more bearable has not been substituted, instead of such sensual, filthy trash.

At the beginning of the second act, Acasto, with his two sons, are presented to our view; the old gentleman descants on the pleasures and dangers of that day's chace; particularly remarking his own critical situation from the attack of a wild boar, and his fortunate conquest over that furious animal. Recital of this last circumstance draws from Castalio a complimentary line, which his father justly considers as bordering on flattery; a depravation of mind he treats with asperity, dismissing it with great propriety from social connections, to the interested dependance of court sycophancy; a dissembling dependance, which he illustrates in very strong colours, and corrects with a keen lash of satire: but poets may exhaust their imaginations, and moralists declaim on the subject till they are weary; yet modest merit will never gain an equal share of favour at any court, with servile effrontery and low artifice.

Serina bringing on the news of Chamont's arrival, gives Acasto singular pleasure; he having, as appears, a warm attachment to that young soldier, whom

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whom he welcomes with the most cordial tenderness. Chamont replies with manly feeling, interchanges some kind expressions with his sister Monimia, and then pays a delicate compliment to Acasto's daughter Serina, which she seems to receive with some degree of tender sensation.

Acasto, in the flow of domestic happiness, and in respect of his royal master's birth-day, orders festivity through all his house; and upon his son's letting fall some expressions of ardent loyalty, he manifests a little of the vanity of age, in proclaiming an anecdote of once killing a rebel who uttered disrespectful terms of his monarch. The laboured panegyrics upon royalty in this scene, were so many sugar-plumbs dropped by our bard to sweeten the leading character of his day.

As Acasto is going off to receive some guests who are arrived, Chamont desires a conference upon matter of serious concern, which being granted, he draws a pathetic, preparative picture of his dying parents, to introduce more strongly the old gentleman's kind patronage to himself and his sister; he then suggests a doubt concerning Monimia's situation and behaviour, which Acasto desires him to clear up, adding a most friendly declaration, that he will defend her cause, even though it should subject his own children to prejudice.

Here a conference ensues between Chamont and his sister, from whence we may infer, that he possesses honour to almost a romantic degree; but is unaccountably credulous, and unpardonably choleric. His account of their dead father is truly amiable; the dream is fanciful, but a strange foundation for a man of even tolerable understanding to ground jea-

lous apprehensions upon ; and the picture of the old hag, who gave his fears confirmation, is inimitable, so worthy regard, as a beautiful description, that we beg leave to transcribe it ; though after all, we judge it a sufficient proof of Chamont's weakness, and wonder at our author for inculcating so ridiculous an idea of witchcraft.

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Through a close lane as I pursu'd my journey,
 And meditating on my last night's vision,
 I spied a wrinkled hag with age grown double,
 Picking dry sticks, and mumbling to herself ;
 Her eyes with scalding rheum were galled and red,
 Cold palsy shook her head, her hands seem'd wither'd ;
 And on her crooked shoulders had she wrapped
 The tatter'd remnant of an old strip'd hanging,
 Which serv'd to keep her carcase from the cold,
 So there was nothing of a piece about her ;
 Her lower weeds were all o'er coarsely patch'd
 With different colour'd rags ; black, red, white,
 yellow,
 And seem'd to speak variety of wretchedness.

Upon Monimia's solemn declaration of strict adherence to virtue, Chamont's strange passion cools, and gives her some friendly, sensible hints, respecting the dissimulation of men in subjects of love. He retires, and the young lady, irritated by Polydore's ungentle treatment, determines, even at the expence of her own peace, to treat Castalio with severity. His immediate appearance gives her an opportunity of putting this resolution in practice, which she does in part, by quitting the stage as he comes on ; this occasions Castalio to utter his dissatisfaction in soliloquy, as also to suggest, that he has
 a natural

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a natural pliantness of temper which his mistress plays upon ; he also confesses himself wrong in trifling with his brother, where so serious a matter is concerned ; but flatters himself, that as it is his first transgression, no ill consequences will ensue.

Polydore here enters, and places that young agent of intrigue, the page, as a spy upon his brother and Monimia ; when the lovers come forward, we find the lady in a fit of warm resentment, much beyond, as we think, any provocation she has received, and the gentleman for some time tenderly condescending ; however, stung with reproaches which arise from mention of Polydore, his temper rises on the fret, yet his resolution shortly fails, and he sinks again into the whine with such effect, that Monimia softens into forgiveness, and a sudden reconciliation, in the true love stile, ensues ; this causes Castalio to vent his extraordinary satisfaction in the full flow of poetical frenzy, rhiming himself and the fair Monimia most harmoniously off the stage.

Polydore, with his little spy, begin the third act, when a full discovery is made to the former by the latter, of all that passed in the foregoing scene ; the page having told his tale, is sent off, when a servant enters with intelligence that Acasto has been suddenly and violently taken ill at the banquet ; the old gentleman soon enters in a state of weakness, but recovery ; having his children about him, he declares the disposition of his fortune, in case of decease, to be an equal division of his estate between the brothers, save a reserve of ten thousand crowns for Monimia. This scene furnishes a strange contradictory lapse in Acasto's conduct ; for after an equal division of his fortune between Castalio and Polydore,

Polydore, he allots one third of it to Chamont, in case of his marriage with Serina, who, in the first disposition of affairs, poor lady ! was totally forgot. These points settled, Acasto retires to rest, attended by all the characters, except Chamont and the Chaplain.

Our young soldier's phrase of address to the clergyman, styling him Sir Gravity, is rather an unpollite, ludicrous beginning of conversation ; the intention of Chamont evidently appears to be getting at the connection, if any, between his sister and Castalio ; however, not being answered so fully, nor so soon as he wishes, he breaks out into the squib and cracker stile of passion, uttering such a train of ill-grounded, irrational, ungentleman-like abuse, upon the clerical profession in general, as cannot be justified : however, the Chaplain, with a most easy, condescending nature, teeming with Christian forgiveness, for the grossest abuse, trusts one he has great reason to think half a madman, with what at present seems essentially a secret, the marriage ; this softens the frantic red-coat, and they part upon very obliging terms.

Castalio and Monimia now appear, he fully satisfied with being in possession of the idol of his heart ; she confesses some female fears from ominous circumstances which she has taken notice of ; these apprehensions the bridegroom imputes to her tender nature, and urges a speedy consummation of his bliss. Here Polydore shews himself, in the mean office of listening at the door : Monimia represents some probable ill consequences from her new husband's coming to her bed chamber ; however, being closely urged, she gives him a signal to secure

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his admittance, and leaves him full of satisfaction at the near completion of his happiness.

Polydore presenting himself, as if casually, to the view of Castalio, and enquiring rather particularly after Monimia, he receives equivocal answers, which warm him into an absolute assertion of his passion; he delivers himself with warmth and roughness of expression, while his evasive brother treats the matter with affected indifference, and retires sneeringly: this behaviour, and his own licentious disposition, prevail on Polydore to attempt a fatal imposition upon hapless Monimia; having heard the appointed signal, he derives from thence strong hopes of success; for the purpose of gaining time, he calls the page, and instructs him to attend Castalio while he is undressing, and to stay with him till he is gone to bed.

Matters thus disposed, he approaches the chamber door, and by giving the signal, brings Florella to the window, who, supposing him Castalio, tells him Monimia wonders at his *unkind* delay; tho' it is certain, as the stage has not been vacant since she went into her chamber, that she has scarce had time to get undressed; Polydore being admitted, with a very fulsome address to his limbs, Castalio enters, followed by the page, whom he wants to get quit of; however, true to his master's instructions, he perseveres in attendance, and obliges Castalio to hear some proofs of his archness, though not much to the credit of his modesty; indeed our author seems industrious to call a blush upon the cheeks of delicacy as often as possible; for he has made this page, which is generally represented by a child, utter some very gross sentiments.

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Being at length dismissed, Castalio prepares for admittance to the mansion of his joy ; but, we think, if less had been given him to say, where absolute silence seemed so necessary, it would have been more consonant to the nature of things. Upon Florella's coming to the window, supposing him an impostor, she treats him contemptuously ; this unexpected and provoking disappointment of his hopes, enflames him so much, that being absolutely refused, he throws himself upon the ground, exclaiming against the supposed faithlessness of Monimia. Here Ernesto, an old servant, following, as he says, the sound of sorrow, finds his young master in that melancholy state ; with dutiful tenderness he strives to sooth his anxiety : on being told a woman is the cause, he declares a hatred of the sex ; this pleases and flatters Castalio's perturbed state of mind, which causes him to exclaim in severe, general terms, against women, from whom historically he deduces some of the most signal mischiefs which stand recorded ; and with this rhapsodical, frenzied exclamation, he concludes the third act, in such a vociferous manner, as we might reasonably expect to draw the whole family about his ears.

Acasto, in soliloquy, commences the fourth act, congratulating himself upon a restoration of health, which he imputes to a happy rest, and yet in the lines immediately after, complains of painful, ominous dreams, which are the bane, the imbitterers of nature's second feast, hag-riding his imagination all night ; this is so gross a contradiction, that it is wonderful how the author could fall into it. Polydore appearing, his father enquires for Castalio, and desires to meet him in the chapel ;
then

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then in a second soliloquy, speaks of having heard Castalio's voice, during the night, conveying melancholy sounds.

Here Monimia approaches the old gentleman, who, after some kind observations upon her engaging looks, asks if she has not heard some particular noise at night, being answered in the negative, he goes off to make further enquiry.

Our Orphan now left with Florella, declares apprehension that her marriage is discovered, which must operate much to the disadvantage of her husband; a kind of complaint is dropped at the bridegroom's cool method of taking leave in the morning. Upon seeing Castalio she retires for sake of meeting him in her chamber, we think it would have been more natural to have met his steps half way: however, her leaving the stage, affords him an opportunity of speaking a very poetical, descriptive soliloquy; but a most unnatural effusion for one under such a violent state of mental perturbation as Castalio is.

Monimia, who has but just now retired, without any fresh reason returns, and flies into the arms of her lord, as she should have done before the unessential dissertation upon mountains, shepherds, flocks, huts, birds, trees, &c. which he has so fancifully entertained us with. Conscious of her own innocence and virtuous affection, the reception she meets naturally gives her a great shock; and though we confess Castalio's provocation poignant, yet we think the author has consulted the progress of his plot more than nature, in making him vent his passions so outrageously, without the minutest article of enquiry why he was refused admittance, as common

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sense might suggest some cause for such refusal, though not the real one; be it as it may, the bridegroom behaves in a most tyrannical, unintelligible manner, and leaves his unhappy bride in a state of distracted grief, which circumstance, however it may offend our reason, nevertheless touches compassion very feelingly.

Chamont, at this interesting, alarming crisis enters, and finds his sister in a situation of the most affecting nature: he tenderly enquires the cause, and hearing Castalio named, very justly takes fire, but somewhat checks the tumult of his mind, till the whole affair is explained in very pathetic terms; upon which he flames irresistably, and vows vengeance on Castalio. This dreadful resolution Monimia is endeavouring to avert just as Acasto enters; Chamont's impetuosity causes him to assail the old man in a blameable, though natural manner.

Giving the epithet of villain to one of his sons, impresses the old man strongly, and the scene is agitated with warmth on both sides; the firmness of age, and flightiness of youth, are finely contrasted; softening Chamont, and then precipitating him again into ungovernable rage, are well imagined, well executed transitions; finely drawn, but rather too highly coloured for strict adherence to nature. On being promised justice, the young soldier retires, leaving Monimia to receive a very stinging, though brief observation from Acasto; importing, that her first complaint should have been to him as a father, which might have prevented such domestic combustion.

Thus wretchedly circumstanced, ill treated by her husband, and in some measure cast off by his
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father, Monimia is left comfortless, amidst a thousand apprehensions for both her brother and Castalio, when Polydore comes in, and endeavours to sooth the distressed fair one with tender expressions; however, not being a very agreeable object, it is not likely his kindness should take the desired effect. Upon mentioning that he knows Castalio to be the cause of her sighs and tears, and urging his own passion, Monimia reproaches him with having attempted to enter her chamber, under semblance of his brother; upon which, with a degree of precipitate triumph, he not only avows the design, but boasts his absolute success. This raises a tremendous alarm in the heart of Monimia, and she cautions him to avoid such a dreadful assertion; however, upon a clear, explicit declaration, of having passed the night in her bed-chamber, nature faints under so violent a shock, and Monimia is rendered for a moment insensible of her horrid situation.

On the revival of her senses, she breaks out into a general execration, and acquaints Polydore with the dreadful crime his precipitate inadvertence has hurried him into. Their intercourse now takes the affecting turn of deep, mutual contrition, and pungent sorrow. One thought of Polydore's, which suggests murdering, if any, the fruit of their guilty joys, is detestably shocking, and the more so, as there is no reason for mentioning such a thing; and of all extravagant excursions of fancy which have offended criticism and propriety, we know not one more hateful and unnatural, than Polydore's conclusive speech to the fourth act; the notion of witches, at any rate, is contemptible, but to introduce a picture of their noisome rendezvous, and to

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present them as feeding upon imps, fattened with the blood of babes, is as disgusting as it is unnatural. The stage has, we think, commendably softened this most censurable passage.

The fifth act begins with Castalio lying on the ground, and, as we understand from his words, taking a view of deer which are passing; from whence he draws a short comparison between the tranquil state of brutality, and the perturbed situation of rational beings. His soliloquy ends with a very gross and superfluous remark: being called upon by his father, he enquires who is so wretched but to name him; Acasto's design is that of a sensible, benevolent parent, to reconcile the breach between his son and daughter-in-law; this desirable point he urges warmly, and insists upon Castalio's condescending to a personal interview with Monimia, but cannot prevail. While they are in debate, Chamont appears, full fraught with injuries: Castalio having heard the rough treatment his father has received from the young soldier, is prepared to meet him on the most desperate terms; from mutual heat, and aggravating expressions, a fatal decision seems impending, the fearful effects of which are prevented by Acasto's manly, spirited interposition, and the timely appearance of Serina; however, the storm seems to be lulled only for the present, and the young men part on very angry terms. Acasto here again renews his suit, in favour of Monimia, but without effect, till Florella enters with a pathetic account of her distress, and an urgent solicitation to see Castalio; this melts all his obdurate resolves, and he hurries off to soothe her anguish. To say truth, he has shewn himself more than sufficiently

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ciently inexorable for any provocation he has received, as the material circumstance, of which she is innocent, as yet remains unknown to him.

Monimia enters in soliloquy, seeking distractedly for Castalio, who comes on with all the ardor of revived passion, with every trace of resentment sunk in oblivion.

Throughout this whole scene there is an affecting pathos of expression, and considerable variety of action: Monimia hints unintelligibly some hidden cause of distress, some unseen bar to the happiness he aims at, and which he supposes rests totally in her power. Grief and tenderness agitate him alternately, in a pitiable manner; at length Monimia leaves him without any explanation, an entire prey to doubts and fears.

At this gloomy period, upon this perilous temper of mind, Polydore enters, meditating on his own deplorable condition, which justly makes him weary of life. The brothers encounter, Castalio enquires for Monimia, of whom Polydore gloomily affects a total ignorance; the word friendship being mentioned, Polydore catches at it, and throws out terms of suspicion against Castalio; this urges the latter to a very affectionate declaration, and a sollicitation of comfort from the former, who intimates he has none to give. At length, Castalio enters upon a perplexed explanation of his marriage with Monimia, this causes Polydore to break into violent resentment, which he gives scope to in very gross terms: Castalio manifests an extraordinary spirit of forbearance; till, at last, being repeatedly stigmatized as a coward, he draws his sword, upon which Polydore voluntarily rushes, to end a being which the effects of his own intemperance

intemperance has rendered hateful to him. ^{Orphan.} Upon Castalio's perceiving the situation his brother is in, all enmity vanishes, and he laments the circumstance which occasions Polydore to own his design, to explain the occasion. Monimia comes in upon this blood-stained scene, and seeing the fatal circumstance which has happened, very justly starts at the object. Castalio now viewing her as an object of singular guilt, seems to threaten death; the expiring brother exculpates our unfortunate orphan in such a manner, that her unhappy husband perceives his dissimulation has been the original and ultimate cause of such sad disasters. Thus the plot comes to a most interesting crisis; Castalio becomes convinced of his own misconduct, and its fatal effects; while the innocent object of his rage and ill-treatment dies of poison, administered by herself---A circumstance we could have wished our author to avoid, as suicide should never be rendered pitiable.

Chamont immediately enters upon the decease of his sister, fraught with the same vindictive rage as possessed him when last he left the stage; but the irresistible tempest in Castalio's breast overbears him, till that unhappy victim of violent love and a weak mind, falls by his own hand. Polydore, who has lingered much too long on the stage, yields his breath on Castalio's receiving the fatal stab, and Castalio himself expires in a few lines, lamenting the sorrows which are brought upon his aged, kind father, and bequeathing his birthright to Chamont; who, after being a madman through all preceding scenes where he has been concerned, immediately commences moralist, and concludes the piece with a most uncomfortable, vague and indefensible position,

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tion, that heaven maintains its empire by the miseries of mankind ; whereas, we think, that the bounties and indulgences of providence, as they are much more extensive and worthy of divine power, so they are infinitely a greater proof of it than those disagreeable, painful circumstances, which the follies and vices of mankind bring upon themselves and society.

In this tragedy we meet with many strokes of peculiar sensibility ; the story affords great opportunity for such, and yet the plot not only abounds with improbable irregularities, but is originally founded upon a most gross and offensive principle ; every idea of delicacy is cast aside, and licentiousness made the vehicle of melting impressions ; the stage is so incumbered with blood and death, that it becomes a spectacle of real horror ; the characters give us in general a very unfavourable idea of human nature ; however, they are well supported, according to the principles on which each appears to be founded.

Acasto is an elderly nobleman, who has passed part of his life in a state of honourable activity ; but being like many other worthy objects, neglected to make way for the preferment of more pliant, courtly tempers, now abstracts himself from all public concerns, and means to enjoy the comforts of domestic felicity. He appears to be possessed of a good understanding, and a liberal mind ; to his children a tender parent, to Monimia, as the daughter of a deceased friend and dependent on him, a kind protector. No great requisites are wanting to render him respectable in representation, yet have we never seen any performer equal to our idea of this character ; Messrs. SPARKS and BERRY, were nearest the mark. Messrs. BRANS-

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BY and **GIBSON**, are at present very poor apologies for it. Whatever ideas theatrical gentlemen may form of *Acasto*, we are perfectly of opinion, that he merits a capital actor to give him due consequence.

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Castalio is distinguished by a soft, amorous turn of mind, whose want of generous, open confidence, causes all the distressful circumstances which happen; he is much more an object of partial pity than estimation. With respect to his brother, he certainly acts a mean, evasive part; and with Monimia, he alternately shews himself a fool and a tyrant: his circumstances give great scope for the exertion of various capital powers, which were amazingly well supplied in the elegant figure, bewitching voice, and excellent acting of Mr. **BARRY**; who, in this part, defied the severest criticism, and justly claimed what he always obtained, the warmest applause that enchanted feelings could bestow.

Mr. **ROSS**, tho' much fainter, has yet considerable merit; he figured the part well, his voice had the merit of harmony, but wanted extent of power for the most impassioned scenes. Mr. **REDDISH** is heavy and inadequate through the whole; neither his love, grief nor rage, keeps pace with the author's meaning. Mr. **SMITH**'s constant failing, sameness, lies remarkably heavy on him in this part; it is true, he rises above insipidity, but does not strike out a gleam of leading merit. Mr. **POWELL** hit off the tender passages much better than any other competitor, except Mr. **BARRY**; but in the scenes of mere dialogue, he fell very short of Mr. **ROSS**; who perhaps for characteristic ease and gentility in them should be placed first.

Polydore

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Polydore is bold, open, licentious, rather brutal, both in character and expression; ungenerous and base in his conduct to Monimia to the last degree; an object of much dislike, and very little esteem; despised, or rather detested in life, unpitied in his fall, more against the actor than for him.

Mr. SPARKS was the most characteristic performer out of many that we have observed; the spirit and subtlety of this part, he marked with peculiar merit. We remember to have seen Mr. SHERIDAN make a most lamentable attempt at this character, and are bold to say upon recollection, that except the bare meaning of those words he uttered, the whole was such a piece of impotent, disgusting performance, as scarce any actor of repute ever shewed before or since. Messrs. CAUTHERLY and WROUGHTON are pretty equal competitors for the palm of insipidity; to say which is worst would puzzle the acutest criticism, and imagination is almost at a loss to conceive the wretchedness of either.

Chamont, in our account of the piece, has been marked as an oddity, and an extraordinary one he really is, but well calculated to shew an able actor advantageously. The quickness and fire of look, as well as expression and gesture, which so eminently distinguish Mr. GARRICK from all his cotemporaries, no where operate more happily than in Chamont; passions which are really absurd and laughable, as the author has drawn them, are by him rendered respectable and striking; the calmer passages he delivers with unequalled sensibility, and his transitions to the impetuous ones are so masterly, that all attempts to describe his excellence must injure it.

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It will perhaps scarcely be credited, yet is most solemnly true, that we have seen Mr. QUIN, when at least sixty years old, and of such corpulence as to weigh twenty stone, roll on for the young Chamont, in a suit of cloaths heavy enough for Othello; a pair of stiff-topped white gloves, then only worn by attendants on a funeral, an old fashioned major wig, and black stockings; yet odd as this external appearance may seem, his performance was not one jot less so; and, without exaggeration, we may assert, that there never was any thing so like burlesque, except the thing itself, as this veteran's dronish apology for the juvenile soldier.

Mr. SHERIDAN-- why, why did we ever meet him in this play, except for Acasto? was untunably formal and stiff in the mild scenes, irksomely boisterous in the impetuous ones; not a glimpse of merit appeared through the whole, except his description of the witch, and the account of his father's integrity. Mr. HOLLAND would have been equally disagreeable, but that his expression was more lively, and his powers, as well as figure, more adequate; though the buckram of affectation stiffened him most abominably.

The Chaplain is as well supported by Mr. LOVE, as any audience can possibly wish.

The page we have seen done extremely well by several different children, but apprehend, Miss ROSE, who played last summer at Mr. FOOTE'S, with so much and well deserved applause, would from her diminutive size, archness of look, and peculiar shrewdness of expression, surpass any who have come under our notice.

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Monimia is drawn a character of great estimation, and touches the feelings of pity in a very peculiar manner ; her attachment to Castalio is open, generous and constant ; in some passages, it is true, she discovers a temper bordering on the violent ; however, she undergoes circumstances of peculiar provocation, and is at last thrown into a most desperate state. It is hard to say how any human mind, especially one possessed of sensibility, could sustain so distracting a situation ; but we could heartily wish that the author had found a more justifiable method of releasing her from care, than by the act of suicide, which takes off much from the regard she has obtained, and manifestly casts a heavy shade on her fall ; her taking poison in such violent perturbation of mind, may be authorized by too many examples in real life, and therefore is not unnatural, but it should have been avoided, as not only highly immoral, but irrational also.

The opinion we gave of Mrs. CIBBER and Mrs. BELLAMY, in *Belvidera*, may nearly point out the merits of those ladies in this character ; equal in the error of sing-song, we think the latter looked and spoke all passages of amorous feeling, much better than the former ; but in rage and distress Mrs. CIBBER was no doubt equal to every degree of conception. In the first, second and third acts, we have very little doubt of Mrs. BELLAMY's superiority : In the fourth and fifth, her great competitor, or rather example, took the lead considerably.

Mrs. YATES, though possessed of powerful and pleasing talents for tragedy, has a certain studied haughtiness of look, and stiff mechanism of gesture, very ill adapted to such a personage as Monimia ;

therefore we never tasted critical pleasure from her performance of it; the mode being much better suited to Roxana than our orphan.^{Orphan.}

Mrs. BARRY rather overfigures Monimia, but by uniting every excellence of the two first mentioned ladies, except Mrs. CIBBER's amazingly descriptive countenance, wherein every feature spoke; she appears to us the best in our recollection. We have seen Mrs. W. BARRY make such a shift with the part as might do well enough on a country stage, but must be very insipid upon a Theatre Royal. Miss MILLER, who appeared at Covent Garden last winter in Monimia, has agreeable capabilities; but, as we apprehend, will never become a capital, standing dish for criticism to feast upon.

Serina being merely introduced to give Chamont a sweet-heart, and Florella to joke upon the disappointment of Castalio, they cannot be supposed of sufficient note to fix any actresses in remembrance; therefore we shall pass them without further remark.

After admitting much of the pathos in this tragedy, so much as even to render it a good acting piece, we are again to complain of gross licentiousness, without the shadow of a moral; wherefore we deem it highly censurable, and sincerely lamenting such a vile prostitution of OTWAY's masterly talents, most sincerely wish it banished by general consent, both from the closet and the stage.

The LAME LOVER.

A COMEDY by Mr. FOOTE.

BEFORE we investigate the comedy now in view, we hope our readers will concur in opinion, that as the author of it is at present living, and has had heavy charges of personality in characters laid against him, it may be an essential point of that impartiality we profess, to take a short view of the comic Muse's prerogative; and having established her power within due, that is salutary limits, a fair trial of the modern Aristophanes may ensue.

We first then lay it down for an irrefragable principle, that as satire could have no just existence without vices and follies, all knaves and fools, of whatever country or denomination, are the natural, lawful game of comedy; general ideas of both may be struck out to the proper ends of amusement and instruction; but how faint are the effects of such compared with those where individuals have sat for a well drawn picture? but then, say some persons, possessed of false delicacy, is it not cruel to render any particular character laughable or obnoxious? to this we readily answer, that it is really nature or habit, not the satirist, that furnishes the cause of such effects. For instance, a printer, with one leg, could never have been rendered the butt of ridicule, if a coxcomical vanity of appearing quite the fine gentleman, and a wit, with intellects very little above

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bove common sense, had not marked him out as a character of risibility. If such a personage as Cadwallader ever lived, of which there is no doubt, could there be richer or more desirable food for genius to feast on? his convulsed motion is not the foundation of the mirth he occasions, his boasted courage, learning, love for, and contempt of his wife, are such an olio of whim, that it would have been unpardonable in a writer of Mr. FOOTE's talents, not to have sacrificed him at the shrine of satire; however some may argue of cruelty, we assert, that a dramatic author, as well as a critic, or judge on the bench, should be proof against all influence of affinity, intimacy, and partial connections. If you apply the rod to a favourite child, it must wound your feelings; but will you therefore refrain due correction, and let him vegetate a wild, uncultivated, and perhaps poisonous weed in the field of nature.

If then an acquaintance, or even a friend, who would perhaps take umbrage from advice in private, renders himself ridiculous or hateful, what more probable method of working a reformation, than by shewing him a strong reflecting mirror of his own defects or deformities? thus then, supposing the person aimed at takes it to himself, it bears a strong probability of rendering him service, though by a painful method; if, as is mostly the case, he joins the public laugh at his own picture, without knowing it, then there can be no cruelty, because he suffers no pain from it; indeed, if a man's circumstances were invaded, or any branch of trade injured, except that most pernicious one, methodist preaching, the case would alter much, and even strict truth, too publicly spoken, be censurable.

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That writer who comes nearest the grand point of teaching us to *know ourselves*, is certainly the most useful ; and in the dramatic sphere, if he superadds peculiar humour, deserves the greatest share of praise. The stage has for several years dwindled into an almost total loss of character and spirit, instead of which is substituted a soft, simpering, vague, declamatory chit-chat, to which is politely given the unmeaning title of sentimental dialogue.

The LAME LOVER opens with Serjeant Circuit, we fear a very common character, and his daughter Charlotte, in warm conference about some gallant, which the former favours, but to whom Charlotte makes some strong and sensible objections. The old splitter of causes, as he is afterwards emphatically called, argues humorously in quaint terms of litigation, and endeavouring to explain the matter, by a case in point, he puzzles himself in a very laughable manner, leaving the point more unintelligible than he found it.

Upon mention of Sir Luke Limp, the young lady suggests that he has other motives of attraction than his pretended passion for her, to bring him to the serjeant's house ; upon being interrogated concerning her meaning, she hints a view upon her mother-in-law, Mrs. Circuit ; this, as she cannot bring any positive proof, the lawyer treats with indifference, and imputes it to her jealousy of the baronet. Here a description of that gentleman drawn in lively terms occurs : speaking of Sir Luke's being vain, even of defects, we meet this excellent remark ; " To be sure, sustaining unavoidable evils with constancy, is a certain sign of greatness of mind ; but then, to derive vanity from a misfortune, will not, I am afraid, be

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be admitted as a vast instance of wisdom, and indeed looks as if the man had nothing better to distinguish himself by." The absurd desire of hunting after, and being attached to people of fortune, merely for sake of their titles, is also alledged against Sir Luke, whom Charlotte stiles, and ludicrously proves a mere nobody, upon very ample arguments. With these preparatives he enters, full of vivacity, loquacity, and self-opinion; his very outset, describing his companions, and the new christening of Charlotte, as he calls it, has a strong zest of humour. Upon the lawyer's observing that Sir Luke is nothing worse for the loss of a leg, our whimsical baronet turns his misfortune to advantage, by observing, that a false limb is free from all the apprehensions of injury and sensations of pain, which commonly attend a real one; there is something extremely whimsical in his remarks upon what he calls the redundancies of human nature, and his challenging the hot-headed Swiss to run corking pins into the calves of their legs, is not only laughable from the oddity of idea, but a just and severe sarcasm against boasters of courage and stoicism.

A servant here enters with Sir Gregory Goose's complimentary invitation to Sir Luke, who mentions a previous engagement; but, upon hearing that Sir Greg. is returned a member of parliament, he throws aside his promise to Alderman Inkle, and complies with the request of his brother baronet. In a very short space the footman returns with a letter, which proves to be a sollicitation of Sir Luke's company from Lord Brentford; this occasions an embarrassment, how to get off with Sir Greg. but he sends an apology for that purpose. Charlotte
takes

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takes notice how the gradations of rank must give way to each other ; upon which, Sir Luke, by way of defence, pays some compliments to the attractive qualifications, especially the wit of Lord Brentford, of which some very laughable proofs are given ; such as taking ready furnished lodgings, and hiring a coach by the month to evade a late act, which limits privilege, also paying his debts alphabetically ; nothing can be more whimsically pleasant than the story of his lordship and the coachmaker.

Upon Serjeant Circuit's appearing loth to part with Sir Luke, the loquacious baronet enumerates several curious engagements which call for his immediate attention. As he is going off, the servant returns in violent haste, with compliments from a duke ; this puts Sir Luke into an irresistible flutter ; his promises to Sir Greg and Lord Brentford throw him into great perplexity ; but being informed that the duke is waiting for him in his *own coach*, with the *coronets* on, every idea of his other friends is sacrificed, and he frames a most extraordinary excuse for Lord Brentford, no less than his being rendered incapable of attending, as two bailiffs had arrested and carried him into the Borough.

Mrs. Circuit finding upon her entrance that Sir Luke is gone, throws out some oblique hints as if her absence had hastened his departure. The serjeant mentioning that he had been solicited to attend Kingston assizes, for one of the judges, asks if his going will be agreeable to his lady, who seems well pleased at the idea of getting rid of him for a little time. The name of his son Jack occurring, Mrs. Circuit objects to the lad's being brought up to the bar, and gives it as her opinion, that a commission

in the army would enliven his natural stupidity with a little fire ; to which the serjeant makes this very pregnant reply, “ True, love ; and a knowledge of the law, may’nt be amiss to restrain his fire a little.” Where this excellent stroke points it is needless to explain.

The serjeant intimating that he should be glad if Mrs. Circuit would stay to hear his son’s improvement, is answered by the lady, that she has business of much concern to engage her attention ; particularly as she expects to be ballotted for as a member of the ladies club. She then enquires when her husband intends to let her have money for the discharge of her gaming debts : to this, in the law phrase, he rather demurs, and with a true petifogging spirit, proposes to avail himself of the statutes against gaming, by which not only all demands against his wife may be prevented, but money made into the bargain ; this the lady treats with very spirited contempt. In their altercation the following valuable remark relative to the effect gaming among the higher has upon the lower classes of life, occurs, “ Whilst superiors are throwing away their fortunes and independence *above*, you can’t think but their domestics are following their example *below* ; the consequence of which is, the same distress that throws the master or mistress into the power of any who are willing to purchase them, by a regular gradation seduces the servants to actions though more *criminal*, perhaps not less *atrocious*.” We know not any passage of similar length, in any author, which conveys more useful satire, stricter truth, or more comprehensive good sense.

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The lady, not at all pleased with her husband's reasoning, insists peremptorily on a pecuniary supply to save her *honour*, as she phrases it. This draws from the serjeant a dissertation upon the word honour, so highly pleasing to us, that we cannot resist the temptation of transcribing, as worthy the perusal and recollection of every reader.

"My honour is in pawn! Good Lord! how a century will alter the meaning of words: formerly, chastity was the *honour* of women, and *good faith* and *integrity* the *honour* of men; but *now*, a lady who ruins her family by punctually paying her losses at play, and a gentleman who kills his best friend in a frivolous quarrel, are your only tip-top people of *honour*. Well, let them go on, it brings grist to our mill; for while both sexes stick close to their *honour*, we shall never want business, either at Doctor's Commons or the Old Bailey." Never was a truer, bolder, or more instructive picture of the times drawn than in this speech; which alone is worth whole scenes of those dialogue novels called comedies.

Act the second begins with the serjeant and his hopeful son Jack; Mr. Fairplay, an attorney, is introduced; who recommends the case of one Mr. Woodford to the serjeant, who, after some interrogations and doubts, desires Fairplay to call on him some other time. This gentleman being dispatched, Jack acquaints his father of clients who have called for his assistance in two very singular cases; upon which the serjeant makes some very laughable, characteristic remarks, and then proceeds to question his son upon some points of litigation, to which such answers are given, as manifest a fund of irresistible

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humour; particularly the case of the cow, which, however ludicrous it may seem, certainly gave a hint of the most serious importance for preservation of that worthy gentleman who was tried lately for setting his house on fire; whose acquittal depended upon something extremely similar to the shrewd assertion, that though cattle may be cows, it by no means follows that cows must be cattle.

After the serjeant's departure for Kingston, Charlotte enters, for whom Jack has a letter from young Woodford which he delivers, and recommends to his sister's notice, with a considerable share of boyish humour; upon reading the tender epistle, Charlotte disclaims all knowledge of its author.

After Jack has exerted his simple eloquence in favour of Woodford, and prevailed upon his sister to give some gleam of hope, Mrs. Circuit enters, and dismisses both the brother and sister from her presence; then enquires after a letter or message, and orders a collation for some company she expects to be got ready. Being alone, she meditates on her situation as candidate to be a member of the female coterie, and throws out some curious remarks on the disposition of time amongst fine ladies. In the midst of a most pleasing reverie, Betty brings on a letter, which being opened with great eagerness, unfolds the lamentable chance of having lost the very interesting election; this so much overpowers her agitated spirits that she faints, a circumstance which necessarily occasions much bustle and confusion; in the midst of it Sir Luke enters, and exerts all his care to recover the distressed lady. This being effected, the servants are dismissed, and Mrs. Circuit desires the knight to read the letter, which he does,

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and at the bottom finds what he thinks a circumstance of great comfort, viz. that she has had sixteen almonds, and but two raisins against her. This scene is justly and pleasantly pointed at an establishment ridiculous to the highest degree, which has been suggested and countenanced by some ladies of leading fashion.

Upon the appearance of Colonel Secret and Mrs. Simper, who mention Mrs. Circuit's disappointment, she affects great indifference, and declares, that the matter has happened entirely through her own design, then invites her guests to the collation in another room; this makes room for Jack and Woodford, the former introduces the latter to his sister's room, and then returns to keep watch; his soliloquy is fraught with real humour, arising from very pleasant and characteristic transitions: while he is making observations Betty, the maid, surprises him, and seeing young Woodford in Charlotte's room, declares she will acquaint the serjeant; this alarms Jack, who endeavours to dissuade her, but finds some difficulty, as Miss has offended Betty by mentioning her drums. Some good strokes are thrown out against the ignorant vanity of servants apeing the extravagancies of their masters and mistresses; when this pert chamber-maid is called off, by the ringing of her mistress's bell, Woodford re-enters, and is questioned by Jack, in low terms, whether he has gained his suit, to which replying, that he thought it too hard to press for sentence so soon, Jack reproves his diffidence, and is going to suggest some assistance, when sight of his father frights them into Charlotte's chamber again.

At

At the beginning of the third act, Sir Luke, &c. are discovered at the collation, and a very entertaining burlesque upon the disjointed nothingness of polite chit-chat ensues; at length the serjeant being mentioned, Sir Luke offers to introduce him, which surprizes Mrs. Circuit, as she supposes him at Kingston. The baronet, with a degree of whim very suitable to his character, brings forward a block with one of the lawyer's large whigs on it, this Mrs. Circuit salutes, as the image of her lord: being determined to have him at table as an object of mirth, she goes off for a serjeant's gown; the mock figure being thus complete, Sir Luke's prolific brain suggests another stroke of humour, which is to plead a cause before the serjeant, as an indulgence to his darling passion. No sooner said than agreed to, when the two ladies and gentlemen go off to get proper habiliments. While they are preparing Serjeant Circuit comes on, ruminating on the hint Charlotte had given him, respecting Sir Luke and her mother-in-law; seeing the collation, he is resolved to partake, and for that purpose going to a chair, he sees his own similitude at the head of the table, which at first startles and puzzles him to know the meaning; however, he puts the favourable construction upon it, that his wife's singular regard makes her studious of having something in his absence to resemble him; happy in this idea, he sits down and enjoys the wine, &c. very freely: approaching feet interrupt his jollity, when looking out, and seeing the appearance of four lawyers, he determines to secrete himself, and slips to that end under the gown, with this very poignant remark, that it is not the first fraud it has covered.

Prepa

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Preparatory to the pleading, Sir Luke throws out some cutting sarcasms against perversions of law, by first observing, that they are only to debate upon the cutting down of a tree, without taking any notice of a borough, which is the real point in dispute; and next by expressing his hopes that none of his brethren have *touched* on *both* sides.

Mrs. Circuit, as counsel for Hobson, the plaintiff, with most loquacious volubility and abundance of circumlocution, not only states but illustrates the case; she describes the utility and beauty of the plumb-tree in question, giving also an account of the clandestine and injurious manner in which it has been cut down; from thence deducing in the usual manner, strong hope that a verdict will be found for the plaintiff.

Sir Luke, for the defendant rises, and after some imagined interruptions, proceeds with much formal pomposity, to set aside his antagonist's arguments, which he traces with strict method, pursuing, as he phrases it, the probable and the positive proofs, both which he controverts in a very ludicrous manner; contending, that the plumb-tree which has been represented as so beautiful and so excellent, was not only leafless, limbless, and almost lifeless, but also of an impoverished species, far inferior to several other he mentions. Here, by a kind of instinct, the real serjeant bolts forward, and mentions green-gages as of superior quality; the sight of so unexpected a person concludes the trial, and leaves only the serjeant, with his friend Sir Luke, on the stage; the former has been so delighted with the pleadings, that in full glee he insists upon the baronet's sitting down and taking a chearful glass with him; both of these gentlemen

gentlemen being previously flustered, a few bumpers force the flow of spirits to intoxication.

Arrived at this critical point, Sir Luke begins to unboosom himself, and by very natural degrees for such a situation, furnishes the serjeant with very intelligible hints of his intimacy with Mrs. Circuit: the serjeant for some time, possessed of a particular portion of confident stupidity, forms no clear idea of what he hears; at last, having such an explanation as he cannot possibly resist or misapprehend, he breaks out in terms of high resentment against his wife, but thoroughly exculpates Sir Luke, and a most whimsical compact of friendship is entered into by the offender and offended; when Mrs. Circuit, who, as it appears, has been listening to this curious tete-a-tete, bolts in, and rates her intimidated, credulous husband most soundly; upon which, he joins her in attacking Sir Luke, and bids him with terms of infamy get out of his house: thus Sir Luke is driven into Charlotte's chamber, whence his appearance draws Jack, Woodford, and the young lady; fresh surprize here breaks in upon the serjeant, however, upon recognizing Woodford, and hoping that the young man's view of fortune may be attainable, hearing from Sir Luke also that the story of his wife was to prevent the baronet's marriage with his daughter, matters subside into a tolerable calm, and the comedy ends with a promise of conjugal obedience from the serjeant to his dear, injured lady.

Having thus traced the scenes and general purport of this piece, we are now to consider the unities and the characters, in a more distinct manner; as to the former, Aristotle himself could not have wished

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wished them more strictly adhered to, as to the latter they have considerable force, variety and novelty: the moral of this piece is rather complicate than single; more deducible from the personages of the drama distinctly, than the general action.

In the Serjeant we find abuse of law and equity satirized with a very keen and pleasant degree of humour; in his wife the false spirit of wishing to join in even the vicious dissipations of high life. is laughably ridiculed; and by Sir Luke Limp, bustling, talking insignificance, united to a ridiculous affection for titles, is admirably set forth. The dialogue of this piece is lively, pregnant and terse, to a considerable degree of excellence.

Serjeant Circuit is one of those detestable practitioners who study the wrong side of law more than the right, and prefer perversion to justice; as knowing, according to an observation in this comedy, that a bad cause is more profitable than a good one; he is a knave in society, yet credulous and a dupe to his wife; an admirer of Sir Luke's oddities, which he mistakes for wit, humour, spirit and politeness. This character is drawn with great ability, and possesses a kind of dry, intricate pleasantry, somewhat difficult to hit off successfully; notwithstanding which Mr. VANDERMERE gave us considerable satisfaction; and we doubt whether his performance of the Serjeant would be mended by any gentleman of either house, unless Mr. YATES undertook him, whose talents in such a vein of humour are inimitable.

Sir Luke Limp is as laughable a compound as ever was mingled, made up of vanity, assurance and verbose nothingness, an obsequious appendage of

quality, and the humble servant of any body who will gratify his busy disposition, by transacting any commission, however trifling or ridiculous ; it is impossible to read this part without tasting its high relished ingredients, but we are very certain that the finest conception which has not been present at the animating action of Mr. FOOTE, must have but a very faint idea of the baronet ; his vivacity, variety, and force of expression through the whole, rather surpasses than falls short of his usual excellence.

Jack Circuit is a well drawn piece of shrewd simplicity, and enlivened by Mr. WESTON's peculiar humour, so forceable to an audience, afforded rich food for laughter.

Mrs. Circuit is a mixture of vanity and weakness, which indeed are commonly united : to say that Mrs. GARDNER shewed talents peculiarly happy, especially in pleading the cause of the plumb-tree, is rather too faint praise for her rising and extensive merit.

Charlotte, the Serjeant's daughter, seems to be a sensible young lady, and rallies her father in the first scene very agreeably ; her strictures upon Sir Luke Limp, and some other characters, discover discernment, understanding and humour. Mrs. JEWELL, whose chief fault is a little want of essential spirit in expression, supported the delicacy of this part in an agreeable manner.

The Chambermaid, who varies little from the general run of that cast, was well enough personated by Mrs. READ. The rest of the characters are too inconsiderable to say more, than that the performers did them as well as could be expected.

Upon

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Upon the whole, this comedy, well acted, must ever please the general ear, but in the closet, if we judge right, it will only be acceptable to the intelligent few who can taste the poignancy of its satire, and comprehend the bent of its humour; a strong proof of sterling worth is its having every night risen above a capricious prejudice which attended the first representation.



C Y M B E L I N E.

A T R A G E D Y.

Altered from SHAKESPEARE by GARRICK.

NO author's works were ever investigated by so many, and such able commentators, in the same space of time as SHAKESPEARE's have been, within the last half century: in many places he stands indebted to their elucidations, in many others they have rather clouded than thrown light upon his ideas; several of his pieces have undergone advantageous alteration, and we repeat a wish already mentioned, that an edition of his plays, cleared from the abundance of superfluous, trifling, offensive, incoherent passages which incumber them, was prepared for, and given to the public.

Reconciling any play written by so unparalleled a genius to the stage, deserves particular praise, as thereby public entertainment is much enriched, and noble flights of genius brought to a general knowledge; the task is arduous, and attended with much hazard; in this light we are to consider the piece before us, and should rather give Mr. GARRICK general approbation for his bold attempt, than point out industriously the defects of his alteration; but however goodnaturedly inclined the DRAMATIC CENSOR may be, yet strict justice, as heretofore, must be aimed at, void of all prejudiced praise or censure.

Cymbeline.

CYMBELINE opens with Pisanio and a gentleman conversing on the state of affairs at court ; from their conference we learn that the old monarch is uneasily situated, as his daughter, by a former wife, whom he intended for the son of a widow lately espoused by him, has given herself in marriage to a person of much inferior rank, but great worth as a man : the account of Posthumus's birth and qualifications prepare an audience well for admitting him to favour ; mention is made of two of Cymbeline's sons lost in their infancy, which as one of the characters observes, is a circumstance calculated to strain credibility.

The Queen entering with Posthumus and Imogen makes fair-faced professions of friendship to the young pair ; but the princess rightly sees through the thin veil of her hypocrisy, and tenderly intimates it to her husband, whose departure she requires, yet pathetically laments ; his return is affectionate. The royal step-dame re-enters, and seems apprehensive of the king's seeing Posthumus, yet mentions aside her intention of bringing him to the view she feigns to dread so much ; a ring and bracelet, as mutual remembrancers of affection are interchanged, with expressions of delicate softness. Cymbeline's abrupt entrance and terms of reproach, hurry Posthumus off the stage ; Imogen sustains many harsh terms from her enraged father, and the Queen gets her share for suffering the interview with Posthumus.

From Pisanio, who was sent to see his lord on board, we learn that he has failed ; it appears to us, that the alterer of this play might, without throwing any weight on representation, have furnished

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nished matter to give Pisanio more probable time for what he describes; what passes between the princess and him respecting her husband's departure is pathetically picturesque.

The Queen next appears, with Cornelius a physician, from whom she receives a phial of supposed poison, which with most murderous intention she forces upon Pisanio, under a mask of friendship, soliciting him to influence his mistress Imogen in favour of her son; this female monster is truly offensive, and rather disgraceful to human nature; however, the feeling mind has a comfort in prophetically perceiving that her abominable designs are not likely to take effect; for Pisanio, as well as the physician, appears to have a right idea of her, and faithfully professes attachment to his exiled master Posthumus.

By the power of poetical magic we are instantaneously conveyed from the English court to Italy, without even the intervention of a chorus, which though an imperfect, is yet a plausible apology for such palpable breaches of time and place.

Philario, Jachimo, and a Frenchman---why was not the latter equipped with a name? present themselves; their conversation, which is expressed in a cramp, obsolete, quibbling stile, turns upon and in favour of Posthumus, who shortly appears, and is recommended to a cordial intimacy with the other characters by Philario. A subject of debate arising upon the qualifications of females, Jachimo expresses himself lightly, and Posthumus warms into an elogium upon Imogen, without naming her; the opposition of opinions at length increases so much, that Posthumus, we must say very foolishly, enters
into

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into a wager upon the impracticability of Jachimo's obtaining any countenance from his wife. This point being agreed between the absurd gallant Jachimo, and the more absurd husband Posthumus, we are brought to the conclusion of the first act, by a forced, chimerical incident, set forth in a scene of quaint, unimportant expression, which cannot help the speakers, nor please a judicious audience, unless supported by very agreeable capabilities.

At the beginning of the second act we find Imogen in soliloquy upon her unhappy situation; after a few lines Pisanio introduces Jachimo, as bringing letters from Posthumus. By the by, courtly etiquette is laid entirely aside, and something of a question arises how a stranger should gain such ready, cordial admittance to a princess, watched in all her motions, and labouring under the displeasure of her royal father. However, the adventurous Roman was to be introduced, and SHAKESPEARE thought the manner of little importance, else by charging him with some commission from Rome, which might have been mentioned in the preceding scene, Jachimo's journey would not have been founded upon so romantic and improbable a circumstance as the wager alone, and his free access to court would in such case be very natural.

From the part of Posthumus's note which Imogen reads, it appears, that he gives Jachimo's villainous design the fairest prospect of success, by recommending him to the lady's confidence in terms of very kind respect. The forward gallant, struck with her beauty, and willing to make trial at once, arms himself with uncommon confidence, and begins his attack politically enough, by descanting on the
superior

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superior value of *her* charms, and the depravity of human nature, particularly in Posthumus ; who being possessed of such matchless excellence, can prostitute his attention and regard to objects of far less estimation. There is art discovered in this part of the scene, and fancy gilds the conduct, but we think Imogen too tame, too dull of conception ; and Jachimo stands reprehensible for several very indelicate ideas, which we imagine the alterer of this play should have softened : how could delicacy let slip ?

Should I—damned then—

Slaver with lips as common as the stairs
That mount the capital ?——

Base and unlustrous as the smoaky light,
That's fed with *stinking* tallow.

—— with *diseased* venturers
To play with all infirmities for gold
That *rottenness* lends nature——

Live like Diana's priestess 'twixt cold sheets,
While he is *vaulting variable* ramps.

—— to mart
As in a *Romish stew*, and to expound
His *beastly* mind to us——

Not one of the preceding passages has the least gleam of poetical beauty, to apologize for fulsome-ness ; and to make a chaste princess violate her own modesty, by mention of Roman stews, though highly provoked, is a violent trespass upon decorum : the turn which Jachimo gives to his intention upon Imogen's resentment, is well imagined, and has in action a very pleasing effect. His request of placing a trunk in care of the princess is odd enough,
and

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and her immediately resolving to place it in her *bed-chamber*, still more strange; this circumstance we must suppose Jachimo has thought of previously, in case other means should fail; and the unsuspecting princess meeting his design half way, they part for the night in friendly terms.

Cloten, the Queen's son, next enters, with two nameless lords---Sure titles were very scarce when this tragedy was written, else SHAKESPEARE could never have incumbered it with such a parcel of anonymous peers. The shallow-pated prince and his companions, are engaged in conversation upon a most important quarrel, occasioned by Cloten's swearing at a game of bowls. This short scene appears to be merely introduced as a specimen of this royal sprig. Upon Cymbeline's entering with the Queen, the obstinacy of Imogen is mentioned, but hopes given that when Posthumus is a little worn from her recollection, she shall be disposed of according to their wishes. Here intelligence is brought in of Caius Lucius's arrival, the Roman ambassador; Cymbeline proposing to give him audience on the morrow, retires.

Upon being told of Jachimo, as one of Leonatus's friends, Cloten displays his mental abilities more at large, shews himself perfectly the incoherent, vain fool, and goes off, leaving one of the lords to descant on his weakness; and to tell in half a dozen superfluous lines, what even the dullest auditor is already sufficiently acquainted with.

We are now conducted to the bed-chamber of Imogen, who expressing weariness of reading, and ripeness for sleep, sends her attending woman to rest, and with becoming piety commends herself to celestial

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lestial protection. When she is locked in the soft semblance of death, Jachimo rises from the trunk, in which he has lain concealed; and in a speech of great variety, judgment, and poetical fancy, takes into his possession and remembrance, such strong proofs of particular freedom and intimacy with the innocent princess, as cannot be controverted: this done, he retires to his covert.

What the short succeeding scene between Cloten and lords is introduced for we cannot apprehend, unless to give an opportunity of clearing the bed, &c. away. When the masquerade is over---such an entertainment seems rather improper for a morning---the simple prince makes a very characteristic speech, but we wish the phrase, *unpaved eunuch*, had not been retained, understood it is shamefully gross; if unintelligible, it deserves the censure of obscurity. In his soliloquy, previous to knocking at the princess's chamber-door, Cloten makes some remarks on the power and influence of gold, too shrewd for such a superficial coxcomb; what passes between him and the princess is shallow foppery on his side, and peevish quibble on hers; the spirit she shews in favour of Posthumus, is indeed pleasing and commendable; her missing the bracelet, and the contemptuous manner of leaving Cloten, conclude this act with tolerable propriety and spirit.

Now, by the irresistible power of dramatic conjuration, we are---hey!---presto! pass!---carried again to Rome; where we find Philario and Posthumus in conference. The latter drops a hint of his confidence in Imogen's invincible modesty; they then pass on to the subject of Caius Lucius's embassy,

Cymbeline.

bassy; demanding tribute from Britain: this gives Posthumus an opportunity of paying a pretty compliment to the courage and independant principles of his countrymen; to which the poet has added a forced panegyric upon living royalty; we call it forced, because applied to Cymbeline, who from what is said of him in the beginning, and his conduct through the piece, can scarcely be deserving of this passage, which we think inelegant as well as superfluous,

and more than that,

They have a KING whose love and justice to them,
May ask and have their treasures and their blood.

The first hemistich in Italics, is not only impoverished but ungrammatical; the last faint and vulgar. Besides, bringing this trite, thread-bare compliment down to the present day, is taking a large jump over seventeen centuries, to draw a similitude by no means desirable, in courtly terms of very steril praise.

The observation of Posthumus, on seeing Jachimo, is a pretty fanciful apology for his miraculous speed, and deserves to be particularly noted,

The swiftest harts have posted you by land,
And winds of all the corners kiss'd your sails,
To make your vessel nimble.

After perusing some letters delivered by Jachimo, Posthumus enters directly upon the grand point, their wager. The subject is sported with for a few speeches, at length his rival enters upon proofs, which his good opinion waves, while the room, its furniture, and such dubious externals are mentioned.

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At length the bracelet is produced, which strikes deep ; however, the confidence of sincere love suggests that she might have delivered it to Jachimo for Posthumus's use : this gleam of comfort is clouded with one short question, and the unhappy husband is harrowed with passion ; when Philario intimating she might have dropped the jewel, another pause of calmer reason ensues, and he desires some corporal sign ; jealous relapses nevertheless break in even before the most substantial proof of disloyalty is uttered. At length, when Jachimo mentions the mole, cinque spotted, upon Imogen's breast, her distracted lord is so swelled with rage, as to be scarcely capable of utterance, wherefore he is judiciously carried off the stage in a state of outrageous dubitation.

In the soliloquy of Posthumus, succeeding the last mentioned scene, there are many fine opportunities afforded the able actor for striking transitions of tones, look and gestures ; and his virulent charge against the character of woman in general, emphatically natural, for a man in his distracted state of provocation. But we must lament retaining the following passages, for the same reason, licentiousness, that we have censured some preceding ones :

—— *some coiner with his tools*

Made me a counterfeit—yet my mother seemed
The Dian of that time——

——perchance he spoke not, but

Like a full acorn'd boar, a German one——

Cymbeline giving audience to the Roman ambassador, next strikes our view ; here we have instantaneously

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stantaneously travelled, even without an act tune, from Italy to Britain. The notion of tribute is treated with contempt by Cymbeline, as echo of his Queen, and the worthy Cloten ; who, to say truth, steps in this scene a little from himself, and speaks with some degree of sense and spirit, though in a quaint stile.

Whether in a royal audience any persons are allowed to speak but the monarch and the ambassador, we are not courtly enough to determine, but we apprehend not ; if so the Queen and her son are improperly introduced, without any necessity ; for the matter in agitation might have been as well settled in their absence, unless it was deemed necessary to shew female influence over public councils.

Pisano succeeds the scene of embassy, perusing a letter from Posthumus, who, in the heat of jealous rage, has directed him to murder the supposed adulteress Imogen ; and for this desperate purpose, has also sent a letter to his unsuspecting wife, advising her that he is at Milford Haven, and wishes to see her there. Posthumus here manifests a cruel, premeditate, vindictive, rather than generous spirit of resentment ; an injured husband, with quick and warm feelings, might naturally sacrifice an abuser of love and honour with his own hand ; but to play the hypocrite, and become a political murderer, favours much more of the Italian than British disposition. However, such our author has drawn his hero ; and Imogen, with all the eager impatience of a tender, loving wife, falls into the snare, at once resolving to set out with Pisano on the journey : if the tender-hearted domestic had not in his soliloquy expressed proper detestation of his master's bloody command,

Cymbeline.

command, the audience must here have been in a state of very painful apprehension for Imogen ; even as it is, our suspense must be touched with tender concern.

Three fresh characters now offer themselves to view ; Bellarius, an old man, and his two supposed sons, Guiderius and Arviragus. After a short, significant and poetical orison, applicable to their lowly and abstracted state, the old man takes occasion to mention mountain sports, and descants with a pleasing, descriptive degree of philosophical instruction, upon the elevated and humbler stations of life, preferring the latter to the former ; to this the youths reply, with a sensible activity of spirit, that their years require a more bustling sphere : we could gladly transcribe this whole scene as teeming with beauties, but shall confine ourselves to the following lines of Bellarius, in answer to what Arviragus and Guiderius have urged :

Did you but know the city's usuries
And felt them knowingly—the art o'th' court
As hard to learn as keep, whose top to climb
Is certain falling—the toil o'th' war,
A pain that only seems to seek out danger
P'th' name of fame and honour ; which dies i'th'
search,

And hath as oft a slanderous epitaph
As record of fair Act——
When a soldier was the theme, my name
Was not far off—then was I as a tree
Whose boughs did bend with fruit—but in one night
A storm, or robbery—call it what you will,
Shook down my mellow hangings—nay, my leaves,
And left me bare to weather.

We

Cymbeline.

We have marked some dissonant contractions by italics in the preceding lines, which might and should have been softened.

Bellarius's account of his own exile and the young princes, is also very nervous and pleasing; however, his soliloquy is a palpable piece of explanatory information to the audience, and therefore censurable: by it we find, that Bellarius, in revenge of his unjust banishment, stole Cymbeline's two infant sons, and that they know nothing of their real birth, but imagine themselves his children, as being brought up from two and three years old with him and his wife Euriphile.

In the succeeding scene we perceive Lucius taking leave of Cymbeline: after the ambassador's departure, the old monarch enquires for Imogen, and complaining of her undutiful abstraction, orders her into his presence. The Queen faintly apologizes for her cold distance: on being informed that her chambers are all locked, Cymbeline confesses fear of what may be the meaning, and goes off; Cloten follows by the Queen's direction, while she, in a soliloquy, expresses hope that Pisanio has taken the quieting draught which she gave him; as to Imogen, the hopeful step-mother encourages flattering ideas, that despair or voluntary exile has put her so effectually out of the way, as to leave the British crown entirely at her disposal.

Pisanio, and his royal mistress, appear next, on their journey; a strong perplexity of countenance, apparent in him, causes her to question the reason of it. Being urged close, he gives Posthumus's letter into her hands with distressful reluctance; the paper, or rather the matter it contains, proves dag-
gers

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gers to her sight, and she is struck dumb, while Pisanio expresses warmly his invincible confidence and good opinion respecting her innocence.

The remaining part of this scene is truly interesting; her solicitation for fulfilling her husband's barbarous command, and the struggles of Pisanio, play powerfully on our feelings. His advice for her to join the Roman ambassador's train in disguise, from thence deriving a probability of being near Posthumus, is politic and humane. Imogen resolves to take his friendly counsel, and being told he has garments fit for the purpose in their cloak bag, she agrees to put on a masculine appearance.

The parting of Pisanio from his royal mistress, his leaving her to prosecute the proposed pilgrimage alone, though there may be some colour of reason for it, is rather indefensible; for we must suppose that a faithful servant, who had dared to elope with her, would have continued his attachment, by partaking her disguise and future fortunes; however, the poor princess is left to encounter alone a precarious and perilous adventure: Pisanio presenting her with the phial he received from the Queen, as a benign and spirit-cheering cordial, they separate and conclude the third act.

At the beginning of the fourth act, we find disappointed Cloten teeming with resentment against Imogen. To him Pisanio enters, and is accused of abetting her elopement; urged with heavy threats, he delivers a paper to Cloten, importing, as he says, the story of her flight, but in reality calculated not only to deceive, but to lead him into danger. The royal gudgeon swallows the bait laid for him, and bribing Pisanio to become his friend, resolves to pursue

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pursue his mistress in a suit of Posthumus's cloaths; declaring also, an intention of killing that unfortunate man, upon meeting him at Milford Haven.

Imogen, now in boyish habiliments enters, and having lost her way, approaches the cave of Bellarius; into which, after strong marks of natural intimidation, she enters, to seek or obtain some refreshment to support languishing nature. The huntsmen returned from their sports, Bellarius looks into his cave, and discovers an unexpected guest, upon whose beauty and innocence he passes a kind and comprehensive compliment.

Upon being seen, Imogen enters from the cave, and prettily apologizes for her intrusion, offering also to pay for what she has had. Inquisition being made concerning her name and destination, she assumes the title of Fidele, and says she is following a relation bound to Italy from Milford. After this explanation, the good old man, casting aside every consideration, but the pleasure resulting from hospitality, invites her to better cheer; and, as night is coming on, to take up her repose with them. Being presented to her unknown brothers, a kind of instantaneous, sympathetic regard rises between them, and terms of mutual regard are exchanged; after which they retire into the cave.

Cloten next appears, upon the hunt for Posthumus, and in his soliloquy, declares terrible intentions against Imogen, when in his power; relying for exculpation from any crime he can commit, upon his mother's influence over Cymbeline. The fop and fool, in this adventure, seems to have a strong tincture of the desperado, which, according to our idea, is making him a kind of paradox in character.

Upon returning from the cave, Imogen declares herself sick, and is therefore left behind, while Bellarius, &c. go to the chace, one of the young princes having previously offered to stay with her as an assistant: by way of restorative, she applies the cordial furnished by Pisanio.

As the hunters are going off, Cloten enters, and from his using the word *runnagates*, Bellarius apprehends a discovery of their retreat; the old gentleman's immediate knowledge of this prince, after an absence from court of twenty years, disguised too in Posthumus's cloaths, is rather an encroachment on probability. Guiderius, by his own desire, is left to encounter Cloten, while his brother and supposed father, look out to see if he has any attendants; after a tart altercation, Guiderius and Cloten engage, fighting off the stage. After a few intervening lines, the former returns victorious, acquainting Bellarius and Arviragus that he has conquered, by the death of his antagonist.

The circumstance of Cloten's death, alarms Bellarius with just fears of fatal consequences; Guiderius resolves upon committing Cloten's corpse to a neighbouring creek of the sea, and retires for that purpose; while Arviragus receives instructions to go and assist Fidele in preparing some provisions. The old man's soliloquy, respecting his two adopted sons, is so beautiful, that it would be an unpardonable omission not to gratify the readers taste, by transcribing it.

Oh thou goddess!

Thou divine nature! how thyself thou blazonest
In these two princely boys; they are as gentle

As

Cymbeline..

As zephyrs blowing beneath the violet,
 Not wagging his sweet head, and yet as rough
 (Their royal blood enchas'd) as the rudest wind,
 That by the top doth take the mountain pine
 And make him stoop to th' vale—'tis wonderful
 That an invifible inftinct fhould frame them
 To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
 Civility not feen from other; valour
 That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
 As if it had been fow'd.

After Guiderius has acquainted us with his committing Cloten's body to the ftream, Bellarius is ftuck with the found of folemn mufic from his cave, occafioned, as we foon learn, by Arviragus having difcovered Imogen in an apparent ftate of death. This circumftance proves of much concern, interment is fpoken of, and Bellarius, with true dignity of fpirit, refolves that Cloten, though a foe, fhall in his remains be treated with refpect, wherefore, he directs that his body may be found and laid by Imogen's.

Cymbeline now prefents himfelf, deeply agitated for the perilous, fickly ftate of his queen, the clopement of Imogen, the abfence of Cloten, and the near approach of war. Perfuated that Pifanio has aided his daughter's flight, he breaths heavy threats, but is foftened by one of his attendant lords, who draws his attention to the public danger, from the Roman legions being landed on his coaft.

When Cymbeline goes off, Pifanio, in foliloquy, gives us to underftand, that though he has wrote to Pofthumus, fignifying Imogen's intention, yet no answer has reached his hands. In the midft of a

perplexed, dubitable state, he resolves to prove himself, by acting in defence of his country, a good citizen, and a loyal subject.

Imogen and Cloten, by a change of scene, are discovered ; the former awaking from the trance she had been thrown into, by the liquid which Pisanio gave her, utters disjointed expressions, pointing, however, to the chief object of her attention and regard : upon discovering the dead body beside her, and supposing it, through knowledge of his cloaths, the actual corpse of her husband, she breaths out heart-felt lamentation for his fate, notwithstanding the relentless sentence he pronounced against her life. While she is in this pitiable state, Lucius enters, with some other Romans ; on seeing the dead, headless body, and Imogen prostrate over it, tender feelings impel them to seek a little further in the matter. Upon question, the princess says it is her master, who lies slain by mountaineers ; the faith expressed by Imogen works a favourable impression upon Lucius, who, with his associates, determine to give the supposed Posthumus as respectable interment as their situation and means will admit : the ambassador's consolative address to Imogen, with which the fourth act concludes, is humane and philosophical :

—— be chearful, wipe thine eyes,
Some falls are means the happier to arise.

Bellarius, and his adopted sons, begin the fifth act ; alarmed at an unaccustomed bustle they hear round them, the young princes manifest a becoming spirit, by wishing to mingle with the war : by the glow of their expression, and the warmth of their

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eager example, the old man kindles into similar feelings, and they unite in resolution to take an active part in the field.

Posthumus now presents himself, ruminating on the death of his wife, and seems deeply to repent the too harsh obedience of Pisanio, in executing his sanguine order; it appears, this unhappy man has been brought from Italy to fight against his native soil; so ungracious a task, however, he resolves against, and utters a design of obscuring himself in peasant's weeds, that under such cover, he may turn his sword against the enemies of Britain, and meet that death his distress of mind makes him wish for. We are amazed why the alterer of this piece should have retained so many insignificant, jingling tags, at the end of scenes, such as want even the merit of harmony.

Immediately after a general encounter of the Roman and British armies, Posthumus meets and disarms Jachimo, but disdains to take his life. This is generous, yet, if we consider that Jachimo has been the foundation of all Posthumus's woes, and that he is a capital enemy to his country, the incident does not appear so natural as we could wish; however, such we find it, and the effect it has on Jachimo, is suitable to a mind filled with conscious guilt.

In the short scene which follows, Pisanio gives us to understand, that Cymbeline's victory was almost solely derived from the intrepid behaviour of four persons, who, from his description, appear to be Bellarius, Arviragus, Guiderius and Posthumus.

Wearied with glorious action, dead to the charms of fame, and torn with perturbation of mind, Post-
humus

Cymbeline.
humus determines, in soliloquy, to reassume his Italian garment, that he may fall by British hands.

Cymbeline is now discovered in his tent, delivering gracious thanks to Bellarius, and the two young warriors; at the same time, lamenting that the brave peasant who shewed such heroism is not to be found. We think the omission of what concerns Cymbeline's vile queen, and bringing on Lucius, &c. immediately the monarch has conferred knighthood on his unknown heroes, is perfectly right.

When Cymbeline acquaints the Roman leader that a sacrifice is to be made of all the captives, to atone the slaughter of his subjects, Lucius not only shews great magnanimity of mind, but tenderness of feeling, by confining his solicitation of mercy to Imogen, in the character of Fidele; struck by his daughter's countenance, the old monarch readily grants the request, and admits the supposed page even to close conference with him.

While Bellarius, &c. are expressing their surprise to see the boy alive whom they supposed dead, Imogen moves her father to question Jachimo; this being granted, she asks him concerning a ring he wears; terms of compulsion are used to draw an answer from him; this brings on gradually an explanation of Posthumus's worth, Imogen's innocence, and Jachimo's villainy; the circumstances related, though already known to the audience, bear repetition very well; what Jachimo relates, works upon Posthumus's grief and warmer passions so strongly, that he abruptly discovers himself, and solicits punishment for the destruction of his wife; on Imogen's interposing he casts her so rudely off, that Pisanio inadvertently
ly

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ly discovers Fidele to be the real Imogen; here a most agreeable eclaircissement strikes us, while Cymbeline and Posthumus become instantaneously happier than so harsh a father, and so precipitate a husband could deserve to be.

Cloten being mentioned, Guiderius avows having put him to death, and is for that action ordered into custody by Cymbeline; hence arises Belarius's disclosure of the two young Princes, to the great astonishment and joy of the old monarch; after their being received into the arms of paternal affection, Cymbeline again mentions the poor soldier, when Posthumus confesses himself the person, and appeals to Jachimo, as having been vanquished by him; this the Italian corroborates, at the same time, begging death from that hand which he has so grievously provoked: but the Briton wraps his injuries in oblivion, and by an example of generous humanity, prevails on Cymbeline to grant a general pardon, with which the piece concludes.

The plot of this play has too strong a taint of romance, and the absolute annihilation of unities is rather offensive; notwithstanding Mr. GARRICK's pains, there are absurdities of a very gross nature. We remember to have seen an alteration of this play by one Mr. HAWKINS, played at YORK, and think it has considerable merit; however, we view SHAKESPEARE between these gentlemen as a stately tree, abounding with disproportionate superfluities; the former has been so very tender of pruning, that a number of luxuriances remain; and the latter admired the vegetation of his own brain so much, that he has not only cut the noble plant into the stiffness
of

Cymbeline.

of an yew hedge, but decked it like a may-pole, with poetical garlands, which prove rather gaudy than useful ornaments. Mr. GARRICK's is, no doubt, best calculated for action, but Mr. HAWKINS's will stand a chance of pleasing every fanciful reader better, because he has in many places harmonized the expression, and rendered the obscure passages more intelligible; however, we wish he had retained more of the original, and Mr. GARRICK less.

In point of character, this play is well supplied with a judicious variety, the lights and shades are so blended as to furnish a picture of human nature, both striking and instructive. As to Cymbeline, he is drawn, what we have strong reason to believe several monarchs have been, and what no doubt many in future will be, a fool; easily wrought upon, by designing persons, to actions totally below and inconsistent with his rank in life. Upon the stage, he is no more nor less than a very poor creature, having nothing to say as a counter-balance to the contemptible light in which he appears.

If an actor can have any merit in the part, we are willing to allow Mr. HURST some; indeed, this gentleman seems to have good capabilities for parental feelings. As to Mr. GIBSON, we have mentioned him so often disadvantageously, that we are absolutely weary of finding fault with his performance; and therefore shall only say for the present, that he is second best in this simple monarch.

Cloten is a strange and hateful composition; trifling, coxcomical, malevolent, pert and proud; yet possessed, which is somewhat strange in such a creature, of resolution. His circumstances mostly
present

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present him as an object of contempt, mingled with laughter, and his fall is a very fit sacrifice to poetical justice. This empty-headed prince can never gain much favourable notice from an audience, Mr. KING and Mr. YATES, both make more of him than criticism should expect, nor is Mr. DODD any way deficient.

Posthumus, as drawn by the author, has two most amiable qualities, constancy in love, and courage in the field; yet, if we examine them narrowly, we shall perceive the former strongly tainted with jealousy, the latter impelled by despair. That he is weak in his understanding, we need only appeal to his strange wager with Jachimo, on which the plot is founded; a circumstance, which would lead us to think, that in SHAKESPEARE'S days, as well as at present, it was the method to determine arguments, not by reason, but betting. That this hero is clouded with rashness and a mixture of cruelty, witness his commission to Pisanio; however, his situation is such, that through the whole we find him an object of very interesting concern, and are led to pity, even where we must blame.

A multitude of instances concur to prove, that no performer ever knew his own abilities better, or strove more earnestly to keep them in the proper channel, than Mr. GARRICK; his revival of this play, were there no other motives but a fresh opportunity of displaying his unparallelled powers, merits a large portion of public praise; for, we are bold to affirm, that considering an actor must make the part, not the part an actor, his astonishing talents were never more happily exerted; this assertion becomes more evident, by considering that the falling

off from him to any other person who has since done it, is greater than in any other character; the tenderness of his love, the pathos of his grief, the fire of his rage, and the distraction of his jealousy, have never been surpassed, and possibly, in Posthumus, will never be equalled.

Mr. POWELL, who passed through this part with a considerable share of public estimation, was in his merit confined to tenderness alone; he much wanted essential rapidity of expression, and the natural variety of sudden transitions, incident to jealousy, rage and despair. Notwithstanding general opinion, we are inclined to think this gentleman's voice and features fell very short of the bolder passions, for which reason his Posthumus, though an agreeable piece of acting, could never be justly deemed great. Mr. REDDISH, whose general merit we are glad to allow, is still more deficient. Last winter a remarkable piece of managerial ignorance or cruelty, was manifested at Covent Garden, by *popping* on a young person, who had never played before, in this arduous, ticklish, and, as we think, unfavourable character; had he been tried in one of many more practicable parts, which the people are used to see murdered, success might have been the consequence. Mr. BENSLEY has since done it, ha! ha! ha!

Bellarius is an old gentleman, well worthy of that respect he generally meets; virtuously philosophical, coolly brave, sensible, humane and benevolent; his sentiments and expressions are such as must please and instruct; for this reason he is acceptable even in Mr. BURTON's representation, which we deem for the most part very dry and unaffecting. Mr. CLARKE renders him much more agreeable; but

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but we are obliged to travel as far as YORK for the best that we have seen, one Mr. ORAM, whose merit both in tragedy and comedy, should have transplanted him to the capital many years since.

Arviragus and Guiderius are in no shape remarkable, nor are any forcible requisites wanting to represent them; wherefore, the four following *charming* performers, whom we lump together from equality and similarity of merit, may continue to *do* them without much offence; Messrs. CAUTHERLY and BRERETON, at Drury Lane; PERRY and WROUGHN, at Covent Garden.

In the alteration of this play by Mr. HAWKINS, Palador, the eldest prince, is made rather more conspicuous than Posthumus, and we remember an eccentric genius at YORK, Mr. FRODSHAM, who performed him with singular merit. This person, though he never reached a Theatre Royal, had extensive powers, good feelings, and the advantage of a liberal education to improve natural understanding, yet was often as great an oddity as ever presented itself to the public eye; wild and uncultivated, his beauties and faults resembled a paterre of flowers, choaked up with weeds; the stage is seldom enriched with such a genius, had he been early placed under critical limitation.

Pisano we must regard as a steady, prudent, faithful servant; he is a very amiable object in the drama, and is supported at both houses with pleasing propriety by Mr. HULL and Mr. PACKER.

Jachimo is a villain of the deepest die, who from a principle of ostentatious gallantry, frames the most iniquitous falsehood; and lays the foundation, not only of misery but murder, merely to win a paltry wa-

ger. Iago, Shylock, Richard, &c. have some colour for their abominable behaviour, but this Italian none. Considered in a state of action, the part deserves a capital actor; Mr. SMITH possesses that easy elegance and spirit which the character requires; but, we must be of opinion, that Mr. HOLLAND, notwithstanding his affectation, claimed a superiority, especially in the last act. Mr. PALMER, though not equal to either of these gentlemen, stands better in this part than could be expected from his station, and his experience of the stage. We cordially recommend moderation in acting to this young performer, loudness of speaking, and violence of action, under the false notion of spirit, are, with few exceptions, very offensive.

Philario Lucius, &c. may be done with so small a share of executive abilities, that the mention of any particular persons in such parts would be totally superfluous.

The Queen is a finished female monster, deceitful, ambitious, and cruel, without any one recommendation, either from word or sentiment; a terrible weight upon any actress, and an offence to humanity. She generally falls to the share of a third and fourth rate performer, and indeed deserves no better; we think a total omission of her would have mended the piece: Mrs. REDDISH and Mrs. VINCENT are passable enough in this hateful, immaterial weed of royalty.

Imogen, for tender, steady affection, is a compliment to her sex, and opens a fair field for happy talents to display themselves with success; she possesses great force and variety, but falls off unpardonably towards the conclusion. Mrs. CIBBER's very
affecting

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affecting capabilities, were much better suited to this character than those of any other lady we have seen; Mrs. YATES has great merit in representing the princess, but wants an essential, elegant innocence; Mrs. BULKLEY has given us more pleasure than could be expected, from a lady so little seen; and Miss YOUNGE has some title to praise, though a proper melifluous flow of expression and ease of action, are wanting.

Upon the whole, CYMBELINE, as it is now performed, stands a good chance of being a stock, or living play, as long as theatrical entertainments are in esteem. To atone for gross irregularities, the incidents are well imagined, the language nervous, the sentiments elevated, and the characters, except in the last scene, where there is a strange huddle of discoveries, well supported; as to moral, we cannot discover any, but that providence, by unseen means, restores suffering innocence to happiness: judicious readers will ever find pleasure from this tragedy in the closet, but decorations and action will most recommend it to general taste.



MAID

MAID of the MILL.

A COMIC OPERA. By Mr. BICKERSTAFF.

A Chorus and duett in praise of rural competence, pleasure and content, open this opera; after which, Fairfield, the miller, expressing satisfaction at such chearfulness, as gives spirit to labour, orders his son Ralph to load flour for Lord Aimworth's; to this the lad replies churlishly, and remarks on a partiality to his sister Pat, both in respect of education, and her manner of living. His observations are pleasant and pertinent; the old man suggests from such a glibness of tongue, that his son is drunk, but Ralph denies the charge, though he acknowledges having been treated with some wine by a gentleman from London; to whom he speaks of returning, and therefore in defiance of all his father's threats, determines not to do any work for the day, concluding their disputes with a song characteristically worded, and well calculated for comic expression.

Patty, called by her father, comes forward, and introduces herself to our acquaintance with a song, intimating that love, and of a hopeless nature, has invaded her breast: from the conversation between Patty and her father, we learn, that a match is depending between one Miss Sycamore and Lord Aimworth; some observations occur respecting a melancholly which hangs round our Maid of the Mill,

The DRAMATIC CENSOR. 103

Head of the Mill.

Mill, and Fairfield, like a prudent, affectionate father, proposes farmer Giles to her as a suitable husband; her reply is complacent and dutiful; on the miller's mention that he may prove a much better man than many who move in the character of gentlemen, Patty corroborates his sentiment in an agreeable air, which has both good sense and a share of fancy to recommend it, for which reason we shall present the reader with an opportunity to peruse it.

What are outward forms and *shows*,
To an honest heart compar'd,
Oft the rustic wanting *those*,
Has the nobler portion shar'd.

Oft we see the homely flow'r,
Bearing, at the hedge's side;
● Virtues of more sov'reign pow'r,
Than the garden's gayest pride.

The word *shows* in the first line, and that which rhymes to it in the third, we apprehend exceptionable; not only as mere makeshifts, but also being unchaste, and rather ungrammatical.

Upon Patty's going off, farmer Giles enters, and enquires what hopes; Fairfield encourages him, by seeming to think there is no doubt of his success, but intimates, that her peculiar obligations to Lord Aimworth's family, requires their consent to every material step she takes. Giles from hence hints a prevailing report that Lord Aimworth, as he phrases it, has a sneaking kindness for Patty; this supposition her father treats as an idle tale, and immediately advises to solicit the peer's consent to his proposed match; this the hearty rustic gladly consents to,

to, but wishing to pay his mistress a personal compliment, the miller points her out in the next room; upon which he addresses her in a song of some humour, and without waiting for any reply, or any immediate interview, he retires.

Patty now appears, and receives from her father the painful information, that her disgustful admirer is gone to solicit Lord Aimworth's approbation of the depending match; this throws her into a strong agitation of mind, and by hesitative intimations she signifies it; however, upon the miller's warm remonstrances, she seems to acquiesce, when he leaves her to a soliloquy, in which she discovers the real bent of her passion is to Lord Aimworth; who, according to her supposition, does not hold her indifferently; nevertheless, several irksome doubts arise, which in the true operatical stile, are composed for the present with a song, very languid, both in versification and sentiment.

Sir Harry Sycamore, and his daughter Theodosia, now mount the stage; by what passes, we are informed, that love is playing cross purposes in this family also. Theodosia upbraids the old gentleman with having encouraged her to receive the addresses of one Mr. Mervin, and having discarded him to make way for a treaty of alliance with Lord Aimworth; the baronet's defence is rather evasively ludicrous than rational, and he is at last obliged to own, that he has sacrificed his own opinion to that of Lady Sycamore. Such condescension the young lady rather objects to, as the effect of good nature improperly extended; and, with a becoming spirit of disinterestedness, upon being asked if she could give up the view of titles and ample fortune, declares

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clares she would most willingly; rather chusing to embrace a cupid of her own liking, in the humblest garb, than one with golden wings contrary to her free, generous inclination.

Lady Sycamore now enters, full of the dazzling appearance of jewels her daughter is to become mistress of, and calls them with other appendages of quality, the blessings of life. Theodosia's more rational idea of things brings on an altercation, and she is taxed with lowness of spirit, in preferring a pitiful citizen to a noble peer; there is a considerable share of pleasing humour in what passes here, and Sir Harry is brought into a kind of dilemma by Theodosia's observing, that he is not averse to her match with Mervin; however, the old lady prevails, and the knight sings forth his resentment for the young lady's contradicting her mama.

Lord Aimworth comes forward, introducing Giles; after paying a short compliment to Sir Harry, his lordship enters upon the farmer's business: being informed it is for his leave to marry, he gives it with condescending cordiality, and adds his hopes, that Giles has made a prudent choice. After some simple, ludicrous circumlocution, the rustic names his sweetheart; upon which the peer pronounces her a deserving object, but seems a little particular, in asking whether the girl is willing, whether she sent to ask his consent, and whether her genteel education may not render her unfit for such a match. Giles's song in praise of his mistress's notable qualifications, has spirit and humour.

After Giles is gone off, Sir Harry slyly insinuates, that a tenant to take off a cast mistress, is very convenient; then talks of his own youthful gallantry pleasantly enough, but carries the joke too far when

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his matrimonial chastity is mentioned ; for which Lady Sycamore, with strict propriety, drives him out of the room.

Lord Aimworth left alone, meditates on, and acknowledges his embarrassed state between Theodosia, to whom he is engaged by promise, and Patty, to whom he is attached by inclination ; some pretty remarks upon the hard restrictions of birth and station occur, but his lordship's song we are not very fond of, as the idea is somewhat forced, and the similitude rather obscure, though trite.

Ralph and Mervin here enter, followed by Fanny, who, as a gypsy, presses the latter hard for charity, but her suit is not attended to immediately, as his attention is engaged by Theodosia's supposed falsehood ; however, he is at length sung out of a bounty, at which Ralph seems very angry, and threatens to take it from her. By the following part of this scene we find, that Ralph has a particular tendre for her, which he communicates as a profound and important secret. Mervin, through Ralph's intimacy with the gypsies, strikes out a scheme of disguising himself as one of the gang, that he may thereby get a sight of his mistress ; Ralph promises him what he desires, the cit then makes a musical exit, and aptly compares his hazardous metamorphose to the ventures of a merchant, who runs known hazards in pursuit of what he admires.

Giles enters with Patty and Fanny, full of his success with Lord Aimworth, which he relates ; but does not meet with the reception he seems to expect, Churlish Ralph throws in a remark, that his sister should change her cloaths for such as suit her station

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tion better; she promises to obey her father, and a quartetto, which concludes the first act, is sung; as to pieces of this sort, the words being mere passive instruments for music and action, should not be criticised.

Lord Aimworth opens the second act with a soliloquy, expressing sentiments of virtuous tendency, and a delicate attachment to Patty; songs are necessary to make an opera, else what his lordship sings here might as well have been omitted. Our Maid of the Mill, with very natural awe and palpitation of heart, approaches her noble admirer; the encounter is well managed, and their conversation opens in an easy, pleasing manner; her thanking him for favours conferred, and his manner of receiving those thanks, are prettily conceived; his lordship's remark upon the change of her dress, shews that she has some interest in his thoughts, and aptly introduces the indulgence his mother had shewn the girl. There is a well connected chain of gradation from one subject to another in this scene, and Lord Aimworth's dubitable, round-about mention of farmer Giles, with Patty's replies, are, we conceive, a good picture of nature in such circumstances; his lordship's declaration of turning the honest, well-meaning rustic off his farm, may be apologized for as a probable start of jealousy, but it infringes upon generosity of principle; however, there is some reason to think he does it merely to try whether she has a positive regard for his rival or not. The feelings of two youthful minds in love with each other, yet ignorant of the mutual attachment, is very well described in this tete-a-tete; his lordship being good-naturedly peevish, and Patty

timorously obscure ; the transition to a marriage with Theodosia is well introduced. At the conclusion of this scene Lord Aimworth's feelings rise into a just degree of perplexity, and he goes off with a very tolerable song.

Upon the peer's departure Giles enters, informing Patty of some rural honours the tenants are going to pay Lord Aimworth's arrival, and soliciting her as a partner in the festival dance, being, as he says, intended his partner for life ; upon mention of this last circumstance, Patty enters into a serious remonstrance against Giles's hopes of a matrimonial union with her ; nay, she goes so far as to declare an absolute dislike, which even the authority of her father cannot remove, or, as she expresses it in her song, fears of the greatest hardships ; leaving him with an earnest request not to harass her with so irksome a subject : she throws poor Giles into a consternation ; his supposition that learning has cracked her brain, is extremely characteristic ; and his method of accounting for the repulse she has given him, we hold in the same view ; his song is nothing but a repetition of what he has said before, however, possesses a degree of humour that must recommend it.

In the next scene we are entertained with some agreeable remarks on rural felicity, of which Patty and Theodosia seem to have a just and spirited idea : Fanny, at Mervin's desire, approaches Theodosia, and addresses her in the right gipsy, begging, fortune-telling cant, but without effect. Mervin, under favour of his disguise, pretends to pick up a paper, which is in reality a letter from himself to Theodosia ; upon reading it, she eagerly desires to be conducted to the writer of it ; this induces the lover

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to discover himself, which he has but just done when Sir Harry and Lady Sycamore come upon them. The knight happening to cough is humourously reproved by his lady for not observing her directions concerning health : upon mention of gypsies, Sir Harry assumes the magisterial stile, and rates them soundly ; however, urged and led on by Mervin, they press after him ; this occasions Lady Sycamore to express apprehensions, while her valorous spouse sings forth his resentment in a rhapsody of abuse against the mendicant crew ; a circumstance which throws the gypsies into a consternation, lest he should be a justice of peace.

Mervin, who had followed Theodosia, returns much chagrined at her departure, drives off the gypsies, and is in violent agitation about his mistress, who unexpectedly appears in the pavillion ; upon seeing her, with the true phrenzy of impatient love, he is for climbing up to her ; however, this she prudently forbids, and, as time presses close, she comes at once not only to a declaration of love, but of her readiness to elope with him. Here a fresh difficulty arises, how to carry the lady off, having no carriage or horses ; she desires him to expect her at the Mill, and to devise in the mean time some method to accomplish their mutual wishes ; the amorous ditty she sings is made up of agreeable nothingness, founded on the pilfered idea of Juliet's calling Romeo back, and forgetting what she has to say.

When Theodosia disappears, Fanny claims from Mervin the reward he promised her society, which he gives her, suggesting to himself a scheme of getting Theodosia disguised as a gypsy also. To further this purpose, and to make Fanny a faster friend,
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he gives her a guinea, as earnest of twenty more, if she will fulfil his desires ; Fanny, by mistaking Mervin's meaning, gives the scene an arch turn, favourable to acting merit.

Ralph's appearance makes Fanny resolve, that unless he fulfils his promise of marriage, he must converse no more with her ; seeing his mistress look gloomy, and receiving very short answers from her, the young miller enquires the cause, and intimates his having a bout with the gentleman, if he has been uncivil to her. This brings her to an explanation, and she claims his promise ; hence a well-conceived squabble arises, and very ungentle terms ensue : quite cock-a-hoop with her views from Mervin, Fanny rates him soundly, and he in return treats her with as good as she brings. This whole scene is perfectly founded in nature, and expressed happily ; Ralph's soliloquy, wherein he vows revenge against his supposed rival, Mr. Mervin, is spirited, humourous, and very much in character.

We are now conducted to the Mill, where we meet Fairfield and Giles over a pot of beer, the former lamenting that his daughter is deaf to all persuasion, respecting the marriage ; while the latter, with a blunt, generous degree of composure, imputes it to the right cause, her liking another better. His disinterested sentiments in this scene recommend him much, and his sensible resignation of the hopes he had formed, shew a good head, as well as an honest heart.

Lord Aimworth coming unexpectedly, Fairfield is rather puzzled to pay his respects with propriety, but is relieved by the peer's affable condescension ; who shortly introduces the subject of Patty's marriage,

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riage, and observes, that nothing but the sudden death of his mother could have prevented a genteel provision being made for the girl; to repair which loss, with very delicate generosity, his lordship presents to the Miller a bill of a thousand pounds, and takes on himself the expence of Patty's nuptials: Fairfield, after expressing suitable gratitude, acquaints Lord Aimworth with his daughter's aversion to the match, and begs his influence to reconcile her. This intelligence and request cause his lordship fresh perplexity; however, the miller sends in Patty, between whom and the peer a scene of critical delicacy ensues.

The manner in which Lord Aimworth sounds Patty's real inclination, his playing moth like round the flame of his own passion, her diffidence and tremor of heart, his avowal of love, her declining the first wish of her heart, to prevent any disgrace from falling on his rank, by an inadequate connection, all do the author of this piece great credit. Matters are left in an undetermined state when Sir Harry enters, flustered with an idea that his daughter was near being carried off by a gypsy man; after expressing his resentment, he takes Lord Aimworth aside, in favour of Giles, who has been relating his disappointment; while the peer and her father are in converse apart, Theodosia lets us hear her approbation of the gypsy scheme.

Sir Harry acquaints Giles of my lord's good disposition towards him, and declaring that he will make all up, a quintetto, expressive of their several feelings, concludes the second act.

Lady Sycamore, and her mate, at the beginning of the third act, are much agitated about their daughter's

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ter's elopement with a gypsey; Lord Aimworth endeavours to soften matters, and desires that he may have the management of the affair, especially as he has been the cause of Miss Sycamore's uneasiness. The knight's remarks upon ladies are rather harsh, and not very characteristic for a man so much under the dominion of a crooked rib as he seems to be. Ralph, under apprehension of having done something wrong, apologizes to Lord Aimworth, who acquits him, and seeing the miller, enquires his business; Fairfield, from a very delicate principle, acquaints him, that as talkative people have thrown out scandalous insinuations, respecting the thousand pound note given to him for Patty, he begs to return it; adding, that farmer Giles has been prejudiced against Patty by means of it. Lord Aimworth condescends to take back the note, and having been, though inadvertently, the cause of Patty's losing one husband, promises to get her another, for which purpose he desires the miller to bring her immediately, but detains him to take a letter he is going to write; then gives the audience a hint of his intention by a song.

In the next scene Fanny becomes petitioner to Ralph, who humorously retorts upon her the rough treatment she gave him, and stands proof against all her solicitation; we apprehend his song, especially the first verse, discovers a delicacy of sentiment and expression rather out of character for master Ralph. Fanny, finding his obduracy, laments her own forsaken state; when she mentions the gentleman, though an enraged gypsey might say, *the devil run away with him*, yet we apprehend it a very blameable mode of expression for the stage.

Farmer

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Farmer Giles now appears, nettled at something Patty has said to him, and from the warmth of conversation declares, that he wont have her; this alarms her pride, lest he should think her temper moved on that account, she declares that nothing but painful necessity could have obliged her even to a seeming consent; here Giles exhibits a touch of the brute, and very justly irritates Patty till her passion gets vent at her eyes, when she sings the following air, which we think worth transcribing.

Oh leave me, in pity, the falshood I scorn,
For slander the bosom untainted defies;
But rudeness and insult are not to be borne,
Though offered by wretches we've sense to despise.

Of woman defenceless how cruel the fate,
Pass ever so cautious so blameless her way;
Nature and envy lurk always in wait,
And innocence falls to their fury a prey.

Mervin, provided with a disguise for Theodosia, comes on here, and she, after rallying him for letting her be at the appointed place before him, goes into a closet to put on the gypsy garment; which done, she sings an air in the stile of those itinerant gentry, and is going off with her lover, when they are interrupted by the approach of Fairfield and Giles: the miller seeing two of gypsy appearance in his house, threatens them with punishment, when seizing Theodosia, to see if she has stolen any thing, he knows her, and expresses astonishment at her disguise. On the discovery, Mervin offers to bribe the miller, who rejects the proposal with proper spirit, and giving him a letter from Lord Aimworth, advises their going

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to his lordship's. - On perusal of the letter, their scheme of running away is laid aside, and they resolve to obey the peer's summons. Theodosia throwing out a good-natured doubt of Mervin's sincerity, he answers by a song, founded upon one of the most hackneyed sentiments in poetical composition.

Giles, in a soliloquy of some humour, acquaints us that he has heard of Lord Aimworth's promise to get Patty a husband, and throws out his conjectures who it may be; he also expresses his satisfaction at having escaped the noose, with one he supposes a cast mistress, and resolves to live a bachelor, that he may avoid the chance of being a cuckold.

From the Mill we are again conveyed to Lord Aimworth's house, where we meet with his lordship removing Fairfield's uneasiness, at the attack which has been made upon his daughter's reputation. When the miller declares himself content, and is going home, the peer surprizes him with a proposition of taking Patty for his lady; the old man's swell of heart at such unexpected honour, the young woman's astonishment at such unforeseen happiness, with his lordship's tender declarations, render this scene affecting; and, we venture to affirm, that what Ralph says upon his sister's wanting a proper acknowledgment, is as natural, comprehensive, and none an effusion of simplicity, as ever fell from any author's pen, "Down on your knees, and fall a stringing."

After a duett, in the bill-and-coo strain, between the happy pair, Sir Harry, Lady Sycamore, Mervin and Theodosia appear; from what the knight says, we learn, that by the interposition of Lord Aimworth,

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worth, the wishes of Theodosia and her lover are to be fulfilled. Upon his lordship's presenting Patty as his intended bride, some objections are started by Sir Harry and his lady, which the peer genteely and sensibly sets aside; then proceeds to provide for his honest father-in-law, and declares an intention of getting Ralph a commission. The forward young rustic's resolution of keeping Fan when he is an officer, and his elevated pertness, are circumstances highly in nature. Giles joining the company, is introduced to his former sweetheart, and promised remission of a year's rent; all parties thus accommodated, the piece concludes with an alternate song.

With respect to the plot of this opera, it is simple, uniform and interesting; the scenes are ranged in an agreeable succession, and the songs flow naturally from the dialogue, which we think well varied for, and adapted to the characters; neither the sentiments nor versification of the songs deserves much praise, and we suppose the author only meant them as mere instruments for combining and conveying musical sounds.

In a review of the characters, we find Lord Aimworth what every nobleman should be, and what we fear very few are, humane, generous, virtuous and disinterested; possessing too much good sense to be swayed by an irrational pride of birth, and too much delicacy of sentiment to approach the object of his love upon unworthy terms. As the part in representation requires more of the feeling actor, than the harmonious singer, however we may like Mr. MATTOCKS in the airs, we must rather object to him in the dialogue; nerveless expression and unvarying features, throw a great damp on this part.

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We are sorry to say, that the same remark is equally applicable to Mr. DUBELLAMY, who has confessedly much merit as a singer, not one grain as a speaker. Mr. REDDISH did it for his benefit, as we remember, and appeared the exact reverse of those gentlemen we have mentioned; supposing his view was more to get money than fame, and that he did not mean to impose himself on the public as a musical performer, his Lord Aimworth was respectable.

Sir Harry Sycamore is a talkative, vain, ignorant baronet, well calculated for Mr. SHUTER, who certainly exhibits him with whimsical pleasantry; however, though we give him the foremost praise, justice obliges us to say, that Mr. PARSONS treads close on his heels and shews himself a very capable servitor in the temple of Momus.

Mervin is a loving gentleman, of very little merit, and at each house has fallen into very feeble hands; Messrs. BAKER and FAWCET do, if possible, less for him than the author has done; so that what Mr. BICKERSTAFF has faintly conceived, they as insipidly execute.

Fairfield, the miller, is a most amiable rustic, possessed of feelings and ideas equal to a more exalted character, a kind parent, and an honest man; the situation he is placed in, and his mode of behaviour, render him an object of respect and concern. We are extremely pleased at meeting an opportunity of giving Mr. GIBSON our approbation in this part, and we have never mentioned him disadvantageously, but his worth in private life made us peculiarly lament his deficiencies on the stage. Mr. JEFFERSON having the advantage of much freer expression than Mr. GIBSON, we must give him so far the preference.

Giles

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Giles is an extreme well-drawn, rural character, and Mr. BEARD did that honest, unaffected simplicity which distinguish him, particular justice; his humour was natural, forcible and intelligible. The farmer has never been quite himself since that very excellent singing actor has left the stage; however, impartiality demands that we should allow Mr. BANNISTER a very happy share of execution, both in the speaking and singing, considerably more than any competitor since the original. Mr. REINHOLD has performed the part with a considerable share of merit, but wants an essential mellowness of humour; and Mr. BARNSHAW has exhibited the farmer, but having more of the Clare Market knock-me-down knowing-one, than rustic simplicity, was by no means an agreeable representative.

Ralph is drawn with much pleasant propriety, and supported equally through the whole. Whatever merit Mr. DIBDIN may have in composition, he certainly has not the shadow of any in acting; wherefore, we are hardy enough to say, the young miller could scarce have fallen into worse hands.

Mr. DYER has some degree of spirit and nature, yet, if we may allude to painting, his performance is little more than dead colouring the character. If Mr. KING had not necessarily a cast of parts, which scarce allows him proper relaxation, the young miller should most certainly be rendered a public favourite, by the recommendation of his truly comic powers.

Lady Sycamore is a vain, positive old lady, who holds her lord and master in that light we fear many wives do; and thinks her own understanding is shewn to more advantage, by taking him into the leading-

leading-strnigs of her direction. Her overstrained modesty in catching at the slightest appearance of licentious ideas, is very characteristic ; her formality and false consequence, are excellently supported by Mrs. PITT ; and Mrs. BRADSHAW, though inferior, cannot fail to gratify an audience.

Theodosia, who has nothing particular to mark her character, and is like most other marriagable young ladies, suffers no injury from Mrs. BAKER, or Miss RADLEY, but we apprehend the superior sensibility of Mrs. MATTOCKS, renders her more pleasing.

Patty appears to be an object of the author's particular attention ; he has drawn her with so many amiable qualities, that even pride must allow Lord Aimworth justifiable, in descending so much below his rank to secure happiness. Mrs. PINTO's execution of the songs has been so generally allowed, and had such amazing influence at the original performance of this piece, that we doubt whether in that respect, the stage will ever find her equal ; as to the speaking, she was much worse than any one we have ever heard : however, be her deficiencies what they may, Covent Garden theatre, in common gratitude, owes her a pension of two hundred a year, for immense advantages received, even though she was never to speak or sing a line more. Mrs. MATTOCKS has given us more pleasure in Patty than Mrs. PINTO, but beyond all doubt the feelings and expression of Mrs. BADDELY, rank her first in critical esteem.

Placed between those very engaging and spirited gypsies, Mrs. THOMPSON and Miss POPE, we may say with Macheath, " Which way shall we turn us, how

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how can we decide ;" however, if the scale must turn, Mrs. THOMPSON's merit, in our view, gives it the cast.

The author of this opera has candidly acknowledged taking his plan from Pamela, and we are happy to congratulate him on having made a very good and agreeable use of the materials furnished by that romance ; his humour is not tainted with licentiousness, and the nicer feelings are wrought up with a probable and instructive delicacy ; upon the whole, we think the MAID of the MILL possesses such charms, such a chaste, pleasing simplicity, that both in representation and perusal, she must have many admirers.



DOUGLAS.

D O U G L A S.

A TRAGEDY. By Mr. JOHN HOME.

LADY Randolph, formerly married to a chief of the name of Douglas, but at the time of this tragedy espoused to Lord Randolph, opens the piece with a soliloquy, expressing that settled grief which hangs upon her heart, for the loss of her deceased lord, and infant son. While in this state of mournful meditation, her living lord appears, and in mild terms reproves the melancholy she wears; nay, is so very moderate in his expectations, that he only requires from her a decent affection; failing of which, his wish is to mingle with the war, threatened by a Danish invasion.

The lady here lets a ray of kindness break through the clouds of sorrow, and speaking of war, she makes a just and pleasing distinction between that waged with a foreign power, and different ends of the same island, which nature has united, conflicting with each other. There is a pretty compliment to the union, and the courage of South and North Britain, in this speech: Lord Randolph retiring, Anna appears; this kind confidant, by striving to balm her lady's wounded heart, probes and pains it the more; the pretence of grief being for a lost brother, Anna asks, what her feelings must be, had a tender, beloved husband been snatched from her arms. Touching upon this master-string of her heart, she leads

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Lady

Douglas.

Lady Randolph to a full disclosure of her mind : the narration of her secret marriage, and the fate of her husband is natural and pathetic ; her grief for exposing her child to the fate she supposes he met, is well described. When Lady Randolph observes, that a fore knowledge of the evils which had embittered her past life, would certainly have broken her heart, Anna makes this very sensible and moral reply :

That God whose ministers good angels are,
Hath shut the book in mercy to mankind.

This conversation, which we think rather too much extended for stage action, is interrupted by the approach of Glenalvon, a person, who, from what she says, is rather disagreeable to Lady Randolph, for which she assigns sufficient reason, by sketching his character, and retires. A very immaterial soliloquy, trite in sentiment, but tolerably well expressed, intervenes between Lady Randolph's exit and Glenalvon's entrance ; this enterprizing blade questions Anna respecting the thoughtfulness of her aspect, and pays some compliment to her charms ; this fading advantage she holds light, from Lady Randolph's woes, and with dutiful feeling for her mistress's painful state, follows to relieve her.

When alone, Glenalvon lays himself open to the audience for a consummate villain, declares himself Randolph's secret rival, and signifies, that there is a scheme on foot to deprive the unsuspecting baron of his lady, fortunes and life.

At the beginning of the second act, a peasant, fear struck, is brought on by servants, and immediately after Lord Randolph enters with Douglas,

as a young shepherd, who has rescued him from the desperate assault of four assassins: after thanks returned to the gallant stranger, both by the baron and his lady, enquiry is made concerning ^{Douglas,} who the brave deliverer is; to this Douglas replies with a modesty peculiar to great minds, that his name is Norval, and that his father is a shepherd on the Grampian Hills, that an attack made upon their property, by a band of ruffians, some days before, had given his active spirit an opportunity of exerting itself, that his success in defeating the banditti, had inspired him with martial ideas, and that having heard of an impending war, he proposed entering the field in his country's cause, as a volunteer. On Lord Randolph's promising him protection and patronage, he replies with a manly sense of favour, and his noble friend takes him off to visit and view the camp.

The feelings of maternal sympathy dawn in this scene, and the following one with Anna, they are judiciously manifested in Lady Randolph's regard for her unknown son; well knowing the treachery of Glenalvon's heart, and his jealousy of any one who may rival him in Randolph's esteem, she determines to be young Norval's guardian. The following similitude of herself to a flower, is fanciful and pretty, but poetical allusions we deem unnatural to a mind diseased; perusal however may not be unpleasing:

I'll be the artist of young Norval's fortune;
'Tis pleasing to admire! most apt was I
To this affection in my better days:
Though now I seem to you shrunk up, retired
Within the narrow compass of my woe;

Have

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Have you not sometimes seen an early flow'r
 Open its bud, and spread its silken leaves
 To catch sweet airs, and odours to bestow ;
 Then by the keen blast nipp'd—pull in its leaves
 And though still living die to scent and beauty ?
 Emblem of me ; affliction like a storm
 Has kill'd the forward blossom of my heart.

Upon Glenalvon's appearance and enquiry after Randolph's welfare, Matilda gives him to understand, we think too plainly, her knowledge of his character and real feelings ; startled with her charge and conscious guilt, he endeavours to apologize, but by the mention of love, increases her contempt and detestation. At length, she acquaints him, rather indiscreetly, with Randolph's attachment to his deliverer, and by threats alarms his jealousy ; this, upon going off, plainly appears, for in the succeeding soliloquy, he determines to aggravate his former crimes, by removing young Norval at any rate ; and, for that purpose, resolves to try the cowardly attendant who forsook him in rescuing Lord Randolph, shrewdly observing, that the greatest dastards are capable of harbouring dangerous revenge.

At the beginning of the third act, we meet Mrs. Anna soliloquizing to very little purpose, as all she says amounts to no more than telling us in a diffuse, flowery stile, that Lady Randolph is asleep, and that she heartily wishes her a good nap ; indeed, she prays for it prettily enough, but placing immortal spirits upon *golden beds*, favours too much of gross mortality ; besides, if we take the idea literally, a bed of straw is preferable to a bed of gold, if figuratively it means nothing : but poets are wedded to

fancy, and too often consider propriety as a mere domestic, to be employed or discarded at pleasure.

A servant acquaints Anna that one of the assassins is secured, and produces some jewels taken from the prisoner, which are strong presumptive proofs of his guilt. Upon viewing the jewels, Anna discovers the family crest of Douglas, and goes off to acquaint her lady with so alarming a circumstance.

Here an aged peasant is brought on, asserting his own innocence and ignorance of the crime laid to his charge: upon Lady Randolph's entrance, we find, that she expects to hear how her child perished; the old shepherd solicits Lady Randolph's protection from the torture with which he is threatened, which she grants, on condition that he truly relates the manner of his obtaining the jewels found upon him; this he would gladly evade, but through fear of compulsion, enters upon the narration, which we think happily related, and the following descriptive lines we particularly approve,

— whilst thus we poorly lived,
One stormy night, as I remember well,
The wind and rain beat hard upon our roof;
Red came the river down, and loud and oft
The angry spirit of the water roar'd.

From Norval's tale it appears, that he found a child floating in a basket, that he brought up the child as his own, keeping from him every idea of noble birth; that this adopted son had left him some days, purposing for the camp, and that he was following to deliver him the jewels that were found in the basket, as from them the real lineage of his charge might

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might possibly be traced. The whole of this relation is well conducted, and free from superfluity; the interruptions thrown in by Lady Randolph during the progress of it are natural; and upon full conviction that the young shepherd is her identical child, the burst of overflowing satisfaction is very descriptive of maternal affection. From Anna's advising a prudent restriction of her joy for fear of discovery, and her agitation, Norval suggests that she is the daughter of his ancient master, which she acknowledges, as also that the rescued child is hers. Lady Randolph desires that the old man, till matters are ripe for a discovery, may go to an old servant of her father's, who lives retired from the world; and charges him, if he should meet Douglas, not to acquaint him with the discovery that has been made. These precautions taken, she orders the servants not only to set the old shepherd at liberty, as being innocent, but to conduct him some part of his way, as reparation for the injury of having detained him as a prisoner.

When all are retired but her confidant, the enraptured mother gives a scope to joy, expressing her ideas in a pleasing flow of expression; and she determines upon an interview with Douglas, not only to indulge her tender feelings, but also to concert with him proper measures for asserting his rank and birth-right. Here Glenalvon enters, with intelligence that the Danes are landed upon the East coast of Lothian: Lady Randolph's remark upon the misery war brings to mothers and wives, is pleasingly compassionate. By Glenalvon's observation, that scorn from those we love is more wounding than the sword, the subject of his passion for Matilda arises, which

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which she replies to with sensible and friendly advice, couched in terms of politic complacence ; with hypocritical penitence he receives it, and not only promises to lay aside his guilty passion, but also to become the guardian of young Norval in the field. Pleased with this promise, the lady retires, assuring Glenalvon, that upon such terms he may rely on her friendship, or, what is much more than any other degree of reward, the conscious approbation of his own heart.

Glenalvon alone, and fit for mischief, casts off the occasional veil of virtue assumed for a few moments, and triumphs in the effects he thinks his smooth artifice may work upon the lady. He suggests, that his own dependance and situation are ticklish, wherefore, he determines to make young Norval an instrument for raising jealousy in the breast of Lord Randolph ; so finished a rascal as Glenalvon appears to be, would no doubt be capable of saying, as well as doing any thing vile. Yet his illiberal remark upon the female sex, with which the third act concludes, might as well have been omitted.

At the beginning of the fourth act, Lord and Lady Randolph are brought forward, conversing upon the Danish invasion ; she expressing female apprehensions, he manifesting the spirit of a brave man. Upon Douglas's entrance, Lord Randolph asks how he has learned so much of military sciences in the midst of rural obscurity ; this he accounts for by a very picturesque narration, but rather tedious to that part of an audience, who are not furnished with a conception as fanciful as the author's ; and burthensome to a speaker who is not possessed of flowing, variable, declamatory expression.

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on. The account of why his instructor became a hermit, is, we apprehend, quite superfluous, and we have a strong objection to the following remark made by Lady Randolph :

There is a destiny in this strange world,
Which oft decrees an undeserved doom ;
Let schoolmen tell us why.

However strange the world may be, this assertion is equally so, having no meaning at all, or a very dangerous one, accusing eternal justice of a partial dispensation---Destiny ! we need go but a short time to the school of reason for proof that there is no such principle in the providential scheme of life ; wherefore, it cannot be thought harsh to consider such a position as inconsistent with sound philosophy, and rather an insult upon our sober senses. Let fatalism be buried in the same oblivion and contempt with witches, fairies, ghosts, goblins, and every other phantom of gloomy, troubled minds.

Here several speeches occur, no otherwise essential than to indulge the poet's fancy with unnecessary mention of a warrior who never appears. Indeed, through this whole scene the plot stands stock-still, merely that the hobby-horse of genius may prance about in the parterres of flowery description ; this will evidently appear by observing, that if all which passes from the beginning of the fourth act, to the scene between Lady Randolph and her son, was cut out, such an omission would not occasion the least chasm.

Left alone with her son, impatient to make the discovery, she enters upon the subject, though distantly

stantly at first, and invites him to a place of more secrecy, yet proceeds without removing. The explanation of his birth is brought about with some merit, but the effect of this scene is anticipated, and much weakened by what passed between her and the old shepherd in the third act; besides, the conversation is stretched out to a length which no force of action can support: feeling should not be kept long on the stretch, for in such case it most assuredly dulls.

After the tender tumults of joy subside, she tells Douglas of his claim to the castle and demesnes which Lord Randolph holds in right of her; then mentions a design of putting him in possession of his birth-right by means of the king; she prudently checks some impetuous starts which break forth from him. After advising him to conduct himself still as Norval's son, and to beware of Glenalvon, he retires, leaving her to make a pious and very emphatic supplication to heaven in his behalf; a supplication which could have no effect if destiny prevailed. The following lines relative to the difficulty she finds to dissemble, are very significant and pleasing;

————— how do bad women find
 Unchanging aspects to conceal their guilt,
 When I by reason and by justice urged,
 Full hardly can dissemble with these men,
 In nature's pious cause?

Lord Randolph, who, from his first appearance, has talked of nothing but the Danes and battles, here enters with the same subject; wherefore, we think his lady, upon going off, gives him a very proper

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proper hint, *to talk of war no more.* From what occurs between Randolph and Glenalvon we discover, that the latter has infected his patron and kinsman with jealousy; and that Randolph has in a letter from his lady to Norval, appointing a meeting, plausible proof of what Glenalvon has suggested. The villain, with great depth of policy, advises Lord Randolph to wait for more particular proof, and for that purpose to forward the intercepted billet to the young swain, that by watching their motions he may have ocular demonstration of their behaviour: this counsel the baron approves, while his pretending friend desires leave to sound Norval on the subject, as from the weakness and vanity of youth some discovery may be made; this bait his lordship also catches at, and leaves Glenalvon to pursue his insidious purpose.

By a short soliloquy it appears, that even he is deceived into an opinion that Lady Randolph entertains a criminal passion for the young stranger: by premeditate irony, Glenalvon works up the temper of Douglas to warmth, for which his mother's account of the villain has prepared him. The terms run high and reproachful on both sides, till at length their dispute is referred to the decision of the sword; when Lord Randolph re-entering interposes, and enjoins peace, demanding also the cause of quarrel, and offering his arbitration. This, with becoming spirit, Douglas declines; another alternative is then proposed, that their private quarrel shall rest undecided till the fate of war is known; the parties agreeing to this, the act concludes.

Douglas begins the fifth act with a soliloquy, wherein, though the characters must labour under

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strong agitation of mind, yet we meet the author again sporting wantonly with his imagination, and also introducing the ridiculous, irrational idea of supernatural spirits conversing with mortals, in the retirements of night and solitude: we can forgive poets any degree of fiction but this, which we hold pernicious as well as contemptible;

Old Norval wandering in the wood, seeing the fondling of many years, approaches, and notwithstanding Lady Randolph's caution to the contrary, accosts him in his real character, and begs excuse for having so long kept him in a state of obscurity; this tender condescension of the old man, draws affectionate expressions of regard from Douglas, who, with great good sense and humility observes, that in his sylvan state, he learned some instructive lessons, which he will ever retain; particularly to treat his inferiors with respect, remembering that he once was shepherd Norval.

The old shepherd having heard some designs against his young lord's life, warns him of Lord Randolph and Glenalvon, who have vowed revenge; unconscious of having done any injury, the noble youth is at a loss to know their instigation, but promises to acquaint his mother with the danger, and to take her advice. The old man here administers a blessing, and retires.

Again the hero of our piece soliloquizes in a luxuriant, poetical, and therefore, for his situation, unnatural strain. There is an elevation of spirit in some of these sentiments well worthy a great mind; but others are trifling excursions of a luxuriant muse. Lady Randolph entering, a conversation follows, in which her son repeats what old Norval informed

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formed him of ; from this she draws fearful apprehensions that the secret of his birth is discovered, and that he consequently stands in much danger ; for which reason she advises him to seek the camp, which he with a courageous glow of mind disdains, and proposes to drive the treacherous spoilers from possession of his father's house.

The fond mother admires his intrepidity, yet fearing for his life, and assuring him of her own safety, she persuades him to seek his kinsman Lord Douglas, in the camp ; this, after some hesitation, he complies with, and in compassion to maternal fears, promises he will restrain his ardor in the approaching fight, as far as the honour of his endangered country and great name will admit. Here, as the mother and son are affectionately separating, Lord Randolph comes forward, with his murderous associate Glenalvon ; however, disdaining assassination, the baron determines to attack him singly, and for that purpose follows Douglas, while Glenalvon remains, and discloses his intention of finishing them both.

A scuffle and clashing of swords is heard behind the scenes, which calls Glenalvon off to execute his fell purpose. Lady Randolph enters in wild confusion, and soon after Douglas, having disarmed Lord Randolph, and slain Glenalvon, returns, but not before the bloody villain had effected the design of treacherously stabbing him. This incident produces a short scene of melting tenderness, and every generous mind must give a tear of pity to suffering virtue. Upon her son's decease, Lady Randolph very naturally loses sensation some moments, through excess of grief ; during which interval, her husband receives the painful intelligence from Anna,

that he who was deemed a rival, was his wife's son.^{Douglas.} This throws Randolph into deep concern; when the unhappy mother revives, she gives some vent to woe in frantic, disjointed expressions, and precipitately hurries off the stage to make way for old Norval, who comes to view and weep over the melancholy scene; being checked by Lord Randolph for intrusion, his grief vents itself at large, in terms of bitter lamentation, over the corpse of Douglas. Anna, who followed her mistress, returns with the lamentable intelligence of her having closed a wretched life, by precipitating herself headlong from a rock; this heaps additional woe upon her husband's head, who considering himself as the principal cause of her distraction, resolves, after giving Anna directions for all funeral respect, to rush into the field of war, wishing never to return.

Thus ends a piece which has regularity of plot and unity of action to recommend it; the incidents are few, and some trifling; the scenes long, and in several places they run too much into a flattening similarity; the sentiments are moral and poetical, but want originality; the language is easy and chaste, and the versification well broke for those who speak the parts to avoid monotony; the number of characters is small, hence some weight on action, however they are well chosen and uniformly supported; time and place are also adhered to strictly enough.

Lord Randolph is so situated, that we can hardly collect the component parts of his character; from what are distinguishable, he seems to be a lover of his country, a friend to merit, and as far as his lady's coldness will allow, a tender husband; brave,
but

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but weak ; with a heart to oppose and conquer open foes, but wanting a head to discern and counteract secret ones. Till the touch of jealousy he feels in the fourth act, and the last scene, what he says is entirely composed of unimportant declamation ; it is not easy for an actor to render him pleasing to any audience, representing him may be called rowing against tide ; wherefore, Mr. YOUNGER, who was the original at EDINBURGH, and Mr. RIDOUT in LONDON, both merited praise for steering clear of offence ; yet so far as recollection will authorize comparison, we think it a duty to place Mr. JEFFERSON foremost.

Glenalvon is, as we have already observed, a horrid picture of deformed humanity, capable of vile actions upon the slightest views. The author has in working up this part, mingled subtlety with spirit, and given a capable performer favourable opportunities to gain from humane feelings the applause of detestation.

Mr. LOVE, the first murderer of this murderous villain, was hateful indeed ; not from marking the character with propriety, not as Glenalvon, but as himself ; there never was sure a more rumbling, insipid, uncharacteristic exhibition since the days of Thespis. Mr. SMITH was a very great contrast to this gentleman, yet as much out of character ; one growled like a thunder storm, the other simpered like an April fit of sunshine. Mr. PALMER has capacity, well instructed and restrained, to do Glenalvon with propriety ; but if the play could be otherwise adequately cast, Mr. REDDISH would certainly do him that justice he has hitherto been wronged of, and give the

author's full meaning with suitable force to an audience. *Douglas.*

Douglas is drawn an object of great respect, as to his filial, social sentiments, and peculiarly so for his ideas of glory ; but the author too often speaks in this part, forgetting character. The young hero's situation is interesting, and his fall claims pity, but we wish it had been effected by some other means, or rather that he had been saved, as his death is a violent breach of poetical justice, and might have been avoided, even to an amendment of the plot. There is some fire and considerable pathos in him, yet we think if he had said less, he would have meant more.

Mr. BARRY never shewed less of capital merit than in this part, almost the whole of it seemed to drag upon his tongue, for which we can assign only two reasons ; that he did not think the writing and delineation equal to his execution, therefore was negligent ; or, which we think most probable, the passions not being wrought up to that degree of expression in which he excels, the part slipped from him without any perception of his own deficiency.

Mr. DIGGES was extremely pleasing and happy in the narrative and descriptive parts, nor was he any way deficient in the strokes of tenderness ; the author stood very much indebted to this gentleman for the prosperous existence of his piece. Mr. BRERETON may walk through it to fill up time before a pantomime or the jubilee, but sure neither the managers, nor he himself, would wish to see the whole of our opinion respecting this attempt.

Old Norval's simplicity, sensibility, and tender fidelity of heart, engage us deeply in his favour ; he

is

Douglas.

is extremely well imagined, and finished in a masterly manner. As it is hard for a performer to render Lord Randolph respectable, so we think it would be difficult to find one of even decent capacity, who could be flat and unaffecting in the old shepherd : Mr. SPARKS discovered judgment and masterly strokes of acting, but was too mechanical and laborious ; his simplicity wore strong marks of affectation, and his grief, in general, was discoverably pumped up by artificial feelings. Mr. PACKER, avoiding such faults, and successfully pursuing the path of nature, deserves preference.

Mrs. WOFFINGTON, whose tragic utterance was, in general, the bane of tender ears, never appeared to less advantage than in Lady Randolph ; flat in the calm, and dissonant in the impassioned passages ; who Mr. HOME might mean the part for originally, we cannot say, but Mrs. WARD, into whose hands it fortunately fell, did it as much justice as the poet or audience could wish, and deserves the praise of having exhibited in this tragedy, a very correct and affecting piece of performance. Mrs. BARRY, at present, who conceives the part equally well, having more power of expression, surpasses the last mentioned lady in execution.

Anna we have seen by Mrs. HOPKINS, Mrs. VINCENT, and Mrs. REDDISH, if there is any difference, we prefer the latter.

The persecution this tragedy underwent in its infant state, from some rigid, malevolent enthusiasts, was singular and severe ; yet, from a very sensible and laudable exertion of public spirit, the author, to our great satisfaction, and the honour of the Edinburgh audience, received unexpected and extensive
advantage

Douglas.
 advantage from the malevolence of his narrow-minded, illiberal foes ; who absurdly confine religion to austerity of features, formality of speech, and abstraction from public amusements. May ecclesiastic tyranny ever find such a fate, through the sense, spirit and independancy of mankind.

Though we have objections to DOUGLAS for want of business ; to some of the scenes for trifling too long with the passions ; to a superfluity of descriptions ; and to the catastrophe, which sweeps off the innocent with the guilty ; yet we are willing to allow it the offspring of warm genius ; and freely subscribe to the praise of its being a moral, fanciful and affluent dramatic poem, which probably may improve the head, and can never taint the heart.



The CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

A COMEDY. By SIR RICHARD STEELE.

A Conversation between Sir John Bevil and his old servant Humphry, opens this comedy; the baronet seems full of concern about his son, and relates an incident which happened at a masquerade, from whence he draws apprehension, that young Bevil is married to, or reproachably connected with a young lady, who was at the forementioned public meeting.

From an observation that Humphry makes, we find that one Mr. Sealand, whose daughter was in treaty of marriage with young Bevil, has taken an alarm, and postponed the match. Sir John, upon this declares, that to clear up matters he will insist upon his son's pursuing the contract with Sealand; and orders Humphry to pump his valet, as possibly from him they may learn if his master is engaged in any private amour. The prince of poor coxcombs, as the old domestic calls him, enters in a full flow of spirits, and rallies honest Humphry, exulting in his own gayer and more unlimited state of servitude; the volubility of his expression, the vivacity of his remarks, and the humour of his ideas, are a very entertaining combination of pleasantries. The remark he makes of having never taken a mug of beer for his vote--would every senator could say as much with truth--is satirical and laughable.

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Upon Tom's mentioning that he has a letter from his master to Lucinda, Humphry asks why he does not hasten to deliver it ; this question brings about an explanation that it is not easy to obtain access to her, Mrs. Sealand, the young lady's mother, being averse to her daughter's match with Mr. Bevil, through a desire the old lady has of matching Lucinda to a relation of her own ; this intelligence, it appears, the loquacious valet has received from one Mrs. Phillis, a chambermaid, who, as he insinuates, looks on him with a very tender eye, and therefore lets him into the secrets of the family. Upon the appearance of this second-hand lady of fashion, Humphry retires, nauseated with the party-coloured beau's intolerable vanity.

A scene of very peculiar spirit here ensues between the valet and waiting-woman ; their affected politeness, their jealousy, and reconciliation, make up a just and amusing picture of their sphere in life, so distinguished for mimic gentility. When their own concerns have been discussed, Tom recommends his master's letter for delivery to Phillis's care ; encouraged thereto by a handsome bribe, she undertakes the matter, and concludes the scene with two lines which have more of plausibility than strict truth to recommend them.

They may be false who languish and complain,
But they who part with money never feign,

A multitude of melancholy instances prove, that in affairs of gallantry, money is often freely parted with to promote the most culpable, vilest purposes, of which deceit and treachery are the base foundation ;

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tion ; however, the maxim is natural enough for a chamber-maid, who wishes fees at any rate.

We next meet young Bevil in his study alone, meditating on the difficulties his proposed marriage throws him into, and remarking, that his only hope is Lucinda's refusal of the match. This pleasing expectation he entertains for two reasons ; first, because she is pre-engaged to Myrtle ; and next, because he has by letter acquainted her with his inclination towards another : collecting resolution from this favourable view of matters, he determines to declare a readiness of consummating the nuptial rites, according to his father's earnest desire. When he has thus prepared himself for an interview, Sir John approaches, and enters upon the matrimonial subject, expressing great satisfaction at his son's dutiful acquiescence ; the young man proposes immediately waiting on his bride, but the baronet waves that, as knowing Sealand is not in a favourable mood of mind to see his intended son-in-law ; therefore, he leaves Humphry as a spy upon his son, and hastens to put Sealand into better temper.

No sooner does Sir John disappear, than Humphry, with a faithful, ingenuous openness of temper, mentions to his young master a lady that gives the old man pain. This draws from Bevil a confidential confession, and in an extreme pretty, well conducted tale, he relates the distressful hazards Indiana, a lady whom he had seen and conceived a passion for on his travels, experienced from the loss of parents, friends, and the villainy of one who was left her guardian, but would have proved her destroyer.

The circumstance of Bevil's meeting her on the brink of imprisonment, his humane, generous deliverance by concealed bounty, and his conducting her safe to England, on the most honourable and disinterested principles, place him in a very favourable point of view. Upon Humphry's asking whether it was the young lady's passion for him, or his for her, that gave him an aversion to the match of his father's proposing, he gives him an answer that shews him rather uncommonly refined in his notions, never having once hinted to her the warm interest she claimed in his heart; and this reserve he imputes to an inviolable filial respect, which checks him from entering into any engagement that might prove disagreeable to Sir John.

Upon being informed that Mr. Myrtle is at the next door, and would be glad of a conference, he expresses readiness to receive him; then asks Tom for an answer to his letter, who informs his master he was desired to call again. Here Humphry withdraws, dropping the satisfactory hint, that there is a secret impediment which will check the dreaded marriage with Lucinda. Bevil agreeably feels for his friend Myrtle's uneasy situation, judging of it from his own; and concludes the act with a rhiming couplet, which would have been much better turned into prose.

Myrtle being introduced by Tom at the beginning of the second act, addresses himself with some degree of resentment, on the subject of rivalry to young Bevil, who endeavours, by proper degrees, to explain the state of affairs; however, Myrtle, spurred by a kind of jealousy, rather warms, from a misapprehension of Bevil's meaning. At length they

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they come to understand one another, and a third person is mentioned as a formidable rival, who though old and an egregious coxcomb, stands a fair chance of success. After some doubts arising, as counsel are to be consulted, it is resolved, that Myrtle and Tom shall assume the appearance of the lawyers employed, and thereby delay matters at least. This point settled, Myrtle goes off, and leaves Bevil to his just and friendly reflections upon the perplexed state of Indiana, whom he resolves to visit; generously, as well as sensibly remarking, that though filial duty will prevent him from ever marrying contrary to his father's inclination, yet that duty does not deter him from the innocent company of a virtuous woman, who is particularly agreeable to him.

The scene changing to Indiana's lodgings, she and her aunt Isabella come forward, conversing upon the behaviour of Bevil, which appears interested and designing to the former, totally generous and honourable to the latter. Isabella speaks with more precaution and knowledge than her neice, but Indiana expresses the genuine gratitude and delicacy of a good and susceptible mind; in the full flow of which, she produces a fresh instance of his benevolence, two hundred and fifty pounds in bank notes, to pay for a new set of dressing-plate.

After an altercation of considerable length, in which Indiana defends her admirer with reason, affection and delicacy, her aunt still perseveres in a suspicion of danger, and, even continues her doubts till Indiana's resentment is rather wrought up, and
leaves

leaves her to make some old maidish reflections upon the perils waiting unsuspecting innocence.

Indiana immediately re-enters, and having been informed of Mr. Bevil's approach, orders his admission, previous to which she reflects upon an alteration in behaviour, a reserve assumed since the report of his marriage; however, love at his appearance banishes all doubts, he appears innocently amiable in her eyes, and their encounter is such as may be properly expected from persons of sense and true politeness. The conversation at first is employed upon matters merely indifferent; at length, the subject turns upon the essential difference of love and esteem, upon which topic some agreeable remarks occur.

At length an opportunity offers for Bevil to shew a feeling of heart extremely recommendatory, that of not being content with barely recompensing merit, but treating it with respect also; this introduces for Bevil's opinion the dispute Indiana has had with her aunt, whether a man who confers favours on a woman he is no way allied to must not be interested; Bevil's answer in the affirmative, rather puzzles the young lady, who is evidently endeavouring to work out some explanation relative to herself; however, this is evaded on his side, till, at length, probably from an apprehension of what her drift is, he retires somewhat abruptly.

At this juncture Isabella returns, and softens her neice's doubts concerning the real bent of Bevil's heart, but declares it necessary for further satisfaction and safety, to find out whether Mr. Bevil and Mr. Myrtle are really friends or rivals; Indiana,

na,

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na, wrapping her heart in confidence of her lover's faith, concludes this act, as every act of this piece censurably does, with rhyme; and that, to say truth, neither very significant nor poetical.

Tom and the volatile ludicrous object of his admiration meet and open the third act; but notwithstanding a free, kind salutation from him, the coquettish jade tosses up her nose, and passes him with an air of quality disdain; stung with this treatment, and knowing her disposition, he determines upon assuming airs also, and the repartee of flirtation is bandied about for some time with equal dexterity on both sides; at length, the swain softens, and relates with much natural whim, the important day and hour, and manner of his falling in love; this, after a few taunts and consequential airs, softens the nymph into an acknowledgement, that her lover's eloquence is very forceable; and she then acquaints him with the effect of his master's letter; how happy it has made Lucinda, giving him also one in return.

Tom applauds their negotiation, as something may be derived from it for their mutual advantage and settlement; here the interview takes a very soft, amorous turn, and some kisses are seemingly ravished by Tom, for which his mistress gives a faint repulse, acquainting him with the different views of Mr. and Mrs. Sealand, respecting Lucinda's wedding, then archly desires him to give her but one kiss more; after which they take leave of each other with great and laughable ceremony.

Lucinda, upon her entrance, enquires of Phillis who she has been hurrying off, and receives for answer,

swer, a sweetheart; here the young lady, we apprehend, descends a little out of her sphere, by observing, that she has heard something like kissing; to which Phillis makes a facetious and ingenuous reply; this draws on mention of Cimberton, and the spirited chambermaid asserts, that he is as much married to Lucinda as quality generally are, that is, by consent of friends, settlements and other pecuniary agreements. In the progress of this conversation, we discover that Myrtle, whose pretensions were once favoured by the young lady's parents, has won her heart; the account she gives of her mother's reserved peculiarity is pleasant enough; Phillis, who seems to be the friend of her young mistress's inclination, declares, that by listening she has discovered the whole of Mrs. Sealand's design in favour of Cimberton; particularly the means used to gain consent from a rich uncle of his, styled Sir Geoffery. Upon the approach of Mr. Cimberton and her mother, Lucinda puts Phillis off the stage; the old lady opens her own character by some formal observations upon keeping family blood pure; to which her starched, antiquated kinsman replies in terms adequately ludicrous; some of his remarks upon the matrimonial connection are gross, and not a little heightened in that sense, both by Lucinda and her mother; the Lacedemonian institution and other points being discussed, they enter upon the main subject. Mrs. Sealand pointing out her daughter to Cimberton as his intended wife; he with his supercilious, philosophical mode of delivery, speaks of her shape and motions, according to her own phrase, as if she was a steed at sale;

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sale; another of his remarks of not allowing her a fallow season when married, though characteristic, is fulsome.

Mrs. Sealand being informed that the lawyers are come, orders them to be shewn in; here Myrtle as serjeant Bramble, and Tom as councillor Target appear; being seated, they enter immediately on the debate; and while the former puzzles the subject with a verbose, voluble introduction, the other stammers out impatient interruption till the scene grows very laughable; at length, Cimberton naturally asks, as not understanding the purport of their pleading, to have a copy of it in English, this offends Bramble; a very good and satirical stroke against tedious litigation occurs by Bramble's reply, when Cimberton desires to have their opinions without delay, "that the law will not admit of" there is considerable humour in the remark of Target after his opponent is gone; though he has not uttered one perfect word, yet he says "I touched him to the quick upon Grimgribber. This scene has a great deal of spirit and humour, but the incident is rather forced and improbable.

Sealand observing that men of learned professions should talk as intelligibly as possible; which render what they say of more estimation, Cimberton makes this very sensible reply.

"They might perhaps, madam, (gain by it) with people of your good sense; but with the generality it will never do: the vulgar would have no respect for truth and knowledge, if they were exposed to naked view.

Truth is too simple of all art bereaved,

Since the world will—why let it be deceiv'd.

At the beginning of the fourth act we find Tom in confusion, and his master chagrined at a kind of a blunder he has made, by letting Myrtle fish out of him Bevil's having received a letter from Lucinda; this, we learn, has produced a challenge from Myrtle to Bevil, for supposed double dealing. When Tom, according to order, retires, his master meditates with some warmth on his friend's precipitation; then reads Lucinda's letter, thanking him for declining the marriage, and making him even a confidant of her attention to Myrtle.

Bevil here kindly considers that some steps should be taken to cure the impatience and jealousy of his friend, for which reason he thinks it prudent to keep the forementioned letter sometime from his knowledge; having read Myrtle's challenge also, which is couched in brief and significant terms, that gentleman appears, and with a peremptory file, requires that notice may be taken of his message.

Bevil's reply to this abrupt address is sensible and cool, desiring an explanation face to face; the subject, as is usual in such cases, rises fast, and Myrtle throws out an intimation of timidity, which draws from young Bevil these truly excellent and moral remarks, worthy a brave man, and which ought to be stamped upon every forward mind. "Sir, you know I have often dared to disapprove a decision the tyrant custom has introduced, to the breach of all laws divine and human: I have often told you, in the confidence of heart, I abhorred daring to offend the author of life, and rushing into his presence--I say, by the same act, to commit the crime against him, and immediately urge on to his tribunal."---Read, read, and treasure up in memory's securest cell,

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cell, this salutary instruction, ye savage, vindictive duellists.

As there is a bound in every breast beyond which patience cannot reach, so Bevil, hearing the modest woman of his heart mentioned lightly, takes fire, and accepts the hostile invitation; here we tremble for good sense, virtue and friendship, tottering on the verge of destruction; however, the author, by a most masterly stroke, the intervention of Tom, gives Bevil a pause of reason, which pleasingly and reputably brings him to the proper way of thinking. He shews his rash antagonist Lucinda's letter; so convincing a proof of his friend's innocence, reduces Myrtle to a degree of pity as well as censure; however, the delicate cordiality of Bevil, anticipates any mortifying condescension from his repentant challenger, and Myrtle is left, instead of servile acknowledgments, to make some very instructive observations upon the precipice they have both escaped, by Bevil's superior conduct. We contemplate this scene with great pleasure, and assert, that it is as happily conceived, as judiciously conducted, and as finely written as any other in the English drama.

Sir John Bevil and Mr. Sealand succeed the young gentlemen: at the beginning of their conversation, the baronet seems to plume himself on genealogy, which the respectable merchant holds in a cheap light, and rallies Sir John upon it with some degree of cynical humour. Sealand, in respect to his daughter's marriage, objects his keeping a mistress; this charge, the baronet, like a kind father, endeavours to exculpate his son of; however, the cit puts the matter to this issue, visiting the unknown lady

himself; and if, upon the interview, he finds nothing to confirm his apprehensions, then there can be no impediment to the match Sir John so much urges, upon this proposal they separate.

From what passes between Humphry and his old master, after the Cit is gone, it appears, that Sir John's anxiety is chiefly about Lucinda's large fortune, which at any rate he wishes his son to obtain, the baronet frets very naturally, however receives some satisfaction from hearing his son's declaration of never marrying without his consent; this scene brings about no determination, but leaves matters in a proper state of doubt.

Phillis in the next scene, acquaints Myrtle that he is in the utmost hazard of losing his mistress, Sir Geoffry being hourly expected to compleat the marriage settlements; this perplexes the lover, when our chambermaid, with the true spirit of intrigue, advises him to personate the old gentleman, this wears so good a face, that he rewards her for so happy a thought, both with money and kisses, concluding the fourth act with a resolution to put her scheme in practice, as well as his disturbed state of mind will admit.

At the beginning of the fifth act Myrtle, metamorphosed into the shape of Sir Geoffry, is brought forward by Mrs. Sealand, Lucinda and Cimberton; he assumes the old knights peculiarity of expression, as well as his antiquity of shape; Mrs. Sealand, after seeing him seated, goes off to give necessary directions; and is followed by Phillis, that she may give the disguised lover an opportunity of being alone with his mistress; after some ludicrous marks

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in the Cimberton stile have been made, Phillis effects her purpose in favour of Myrtle, by delivering a message to Cimberton from Mrs. Sealand; this removes him, and the stage is left clear for the lover to disclose himself, which he does with such rapturous precipitation, that through surprise Lucinda screams out, which brings back the company; here, upon apprehension of a discovery, Myrtle, with very quick address, feigns himself in a fit, which serves as a good apology for Lucinda's surprize and confusion; the matter being thus settled, the supposed old gentleman is conducted off. The circumstance of pulling his nephew's ear is farcial to the last degree, therefore much below the dignity of this piece.

Mr. Sealand, conducted by Humphry to Indiana's house, next appears, knocks at the door, when Daniel, a high finished picture of rustic simplicity, furnished with some degree of urbanic cunning and evasion, is produced; his answers to the merchant's enquiry for his mistress are replete with humour, and never fail of having a powerful effect; at length, by the help of that argument which seldom fails to influence both the simple and wise, a bribe, Sealand gains admittance; first obtains a short audience of Isabella, who recollects him, but does not make herself known, and then is introduced to Indiana; he addresses her with respect, as having some money to pay her, which circumstance brings on the main subject, Mr. Bevil's connection with her; the citizen reproaches that young gentleman with deceiving so deserving a person, while she, with generous gratitude, vindicates

cates his honourable conduct; at length, judging Sealand to be his intended father-in-law, her passion works up into a swell of grief.

In the flow of anxiety for losing a man so dear to her, she indulges her painful feelings with tears, and very naturally recapitulates a succession of misfortunes which have fallen upon her, even from earliest infancy; some of the circumstances strike Sealand, who, at length by the circumstance of a bracelet she throws from her, and an enquiry into the real name, he perceives her to be his own daughter; her identity is verified by Isabella, and the scene, which is beautifully wrought up, here causes the most pleasing sensations. The other characters now enter, having been told the wonderful discovery by Isabella, Sir John congratulates the happy father and daughter; by the by, it is a little odd how they should meet so suddenly at Indiana's house, and how Sir John should know that Sealand intended to give her a fortune equal to his wishes: however, the author wanted to bring about his catastrophe, so claps Bevil and Indiana together as expeditiously as possible. This circumstance depriving Lucinda of half her fortune, Cimberton, whose views were founded more upon interest than love, gives up his claim, and thereby affords Myrtle an opportunity of throwing off his disguise, and proposing his own generous passion, which Sealand immediately ratifies with his consent. Matters thus agreeably settled, Sir John briefly deduces from past transactions this excellent moral, That providence superintends and rewards the perseverance of virtue.

Having

Conscious Lovers.

Having passed through this comedy with great pleasure to ourselves, and we hope satisfaction to the reader, we must give its author great praise, both for his design and execution. The plot is regular ; intricate, yet obvious ; the sentiments moral ; the language easy and genteel ; there is spirit without licentiousness, and surprize without improbability ; the characters exhibit nature and variety.

Sir John Bèvil, as a fond father, deserves respect ; but there is a selfish, narrow-minded principle, capable of sacrificing even the son he loves to interest, that greatly lowers our opinion of him ; he has nothing to say but what the mediocrity of Messrs. GIBSON and BURTON may utter decently enough ; we have seen several others exhibit the old knight, but so little worth notice that we cannot recollect them.

Mr. Sealand is a plain, unaffected, generous citizen ; a man of liberal principles without ostentation, and sound sense without pedantry, bred in the school of adversity. This honest citizen was extremely well figured, and suitably performed by Mr. SPARKS ; his anxiety, surprize, tenderness and joy, in the scene where Indiana is discovered to be his long lost daughter, were well expressed, and he struck out many judicious beauties. Mr. BERRY, as was usual with him, mouthed the conversation, and blubbered the pathetic ; and, as to his personal appearance, it was very ungentleman-like, both in figure and deportment. At present, we know not any performer, at either house, however strange the assertion may seem, calculated to do the merchant justice ; who, though he requires no capital powers, yet calls for judgment and expression not easily found. We are by no means fond of Mr. AICKIN's paternal feeling ;

ings ; nor do those of Mr. CLARKE give us much pleasure. Mr. HULL, we apprehend, must come nearest him, unless Mr. BARRY would vouchsafe to perform the part:

Young Bevil is drawn a fine pattern for young gentlemen of fortune ; virtuously generous, coolly brave ; a disinterested lover, a dutiful son, and a sincere friend. He has been stiled “ a faultless monster, which the world ne’er saw ;” but we cannot find any reason for supposing that an author, though he ornaments a character with many valuable qualifications, presents him to view as perfect ; and such a man as young Bevil might have not only some weakness, nay some vice about him, though the circumstances of this play don’t call either into action.

To carry recollection back as far as we are able, with any degree of precision, we remember Mr. QUIN, when he was big enough to do Falstaff without stuffing, rumbling forth this part with very near as great pomposity as he sounded Cato with ; a major wig, as in the *young Chamont*, graced his large head ; and though young Bevil mentions gaiety of dress, by calling his cloaths the splendid covering of sorrow, yet this *great* actor once, perhaps oftner, ornamented the part with the very cloaths which he played the Old Batchelor in.

Mr. SHERIDAN barked out young Bevil several years in DUBLIN with great applause---a notable proof of critical judgment in the audience there---for, beyond every degree of dispute, he was not furnished with any one requisite ; the snap of his expression, the stiffness of his deportment, with the natural alternate squeaks and croaks of his unhappy voice,

Confidius Lovers.

voice, were such a group of impediments, as never before incumbered an audience, or lowered an actor of any esteem.

Mr. Ross, when first he played the character at Drury Lane, was as correct, easy, spirited and genteel, as criticism could wish; he looked, moved, and spoke like a gentleman. From what we have seen of him lately, he is grown too corpulent for the requisite freedom, and too careless for the essential spirit; performance seems rather a fatigue to him, and any trace of that must be injurious to such a part as young Bevil. Mr. FLEETWOOD, who has left the stage some few years past, had a great deal of merit in this character; his figure, manner, and delivery, all corresponded to place him in a very favourable light.

Mr. REDDISH is much the most capable at present, as Mr. BARRY's age destroys the merit he once had.

Myrtle has no particular characteristical distinction, his principles appear generally good, his temper somewhat warm; he requires more acting than Bevil, as he assumes different shapes, a volubility is wanting for Bramble, a low comedy feebleness for Sir Geoffry. Mr. RYAN, allowing for age and oddity, was not at all amiss in personating of him: Mr. SMITH is no way displeasing, nor in any shape capital: Mr. JEFFERSON is faint indeed: Mr. LEE through the whole chafely excellent.

Cimberton is a coxcomb of peculiar mold, facetiously consequential, ludicrously sententious; his vein of humour is not hard to hit, and his words speak for themselves; however, we have seen him considerably flattened in performance. Mr. SHU-

Confious Lovens.

TER is too luxuriant, Mr. LOVE too dry, yet both have considerable merit ; there was a medium between these two gentlemen which Mr. TASWELL exhibited, thereby irresistably working upon the comic feelings.

There never was a better drawn coxcomb of the party-coloured corps than Tom ; the outlines are highly natural, and the finishing exquisite. If an actor has any merit in the fop cast, he must give pleasure in this part, there is a pert *jen se quoy* about him truly diverting : it is said this part and Phillis were added to the piece by Mr. CIBBER ; if so, it is indebted to him for a very happy addition of vivacity ; we have seen his son perform it with considerable pleasure, but think he rather grimaced it too much ; the same fault we find with Mr. WOODWARD, yet allow his studied deportment more justifiable in this than many other parts, because affected gentility will plan attitudes, while real grace of figure and motion proceeds from what Dr. JOHNSON calls spontaniety. Mr. DYER, by help of a song, has skipped through the valet agreeably enough ; but for the author's meaning, and nature without any trick, we must appeal to the animated critical execution of Mr. KING.

Daniel, as we have already intimated, is a most pleasing simpleton, as well written for the length of him as any part in the piece, and though so short a time in sight, is by many of an audience longest remembered. Mr. HAMILTON well deserves applause for the *navité* of his expression, but nature's own comedian, Mr. WESTON, is droll beyond every degree of conception ; those who have not seen or heard him must fail of an adequate idea. Mr. WALDRON has lately slipped into his shoes, but hobbles most horribly slipshod.

KING

K I N G J O H N.

A TRAGEDY: By SHAKESPEARE.

THIS Play opens with peculiar dignity, being the royal audience of a French ambassador, whose very insolent address and arrogant demands, are replied to with such spirit as we wish British monarchs upon such an occasion may ever shew. From an observation made by the queen mother, upon Chastillon's departure, it appears, that the kindling flame of war has been lighted by Lady Constance, in favour of her son Prince Arthur, whose just title the queen seems to admit.

Robert Falconbridge, and his brother Philip, are introduced for King John's decision concerning a plea of birth-right, Robert urging bastardy against his brother. Philip's blunt, sportive method of expression, tainted too with licentiousness, is abominable stuff for the ears and respectful decorum of royalty to be violated with ; however, from tracing some marks in his visage of that corrupt descent he seems to boast, after a slight altercation, the matter is settled thus ; heritage of the paternal estate is granted to the legitimate brother, and Philip, with an invitation to join the warlike preparation, is knighted and confirmed in bastardy, by being ordered to take the royal name of Plantagenet.

After King John goes off, declaring his immediate intentions of invading France, our new made

king knight stays behind to meditate upon the change of his situation, which he does in a soliloquy of very quaint conceit; burthenfome to an audience, because three-fourths of it is unintelligible to the general ear; and indeed, if not, is of very immaterial tendency. What ensues between this flighty blade and his mother, only serves to confirm what the king and queen took as fact, merely from apprehension.

We cannot think our author had any kind of reason for bringing Lady Falconbridge before an audience to confess her shame with such effrontery, therefore censure this scene highly; and are of opinion, that the last seven lines of this Act, spoken by the Bastard, are much more suitable to the bully of a brothel, than a person of good sense, good breeding, and real spirit. This character might have been marked with oddity, as is evidently intended, without so much offence.

At the beginning of the second act, by poetical conveyance, we meet the French king and his powers before the walls of Angiers, where Constance and her son Arthur, yield him thanks for espousing their distressful cause. Upon the arrival of Chatillion, his master is informed not only of King John's warlike resolution, but that he has coursed him at the heels with such unaccountable expedition, as to be within the sound of beaten drums. We apprehend the play would have begun with much more propriety at this period, and there is not a single passage in the first act, save King John's reply to Chatillion, that could cause taste or judgment to lament the omission of it.

Upon

King John.

Upon meeting his brother of France, King John first utters peace, and then, on refusal, denounces war. To this the French monarch replies by arguments, in favour of Arthur's right; an altercation ensues, in which the ladies join, without seeming to have the least regard for essential delicacy: what passes between Austria and the Bastard also, is fitter for coalheavers than men of rank and education.

Upon a proposition of surrendering all his dominions in right of Arthur, John treats King Philip with contempt, but offers protection to the young prince; this brings on a fresh brawl between the ladies; at length, the citizens of Angiers being summoned to their walls by sound of trumpet, the two kings severally address them, denouncing threats on each side. Thus embarrassed, and equally endangered, the citizens very prudently intimate, that whoever proves strongest will prevail with them. This occasions immediate determination of a battle, for which purpose both kings go off. Here a scene of tumult, and what we may justly stile theatrical confusion, ensues, alarms! heralds! and a victory; after which the kings again meet, again debate, and still talk in a high strain, while Falconbridge flames between them with the spirit of Até.

After much controversy, to very little purpose, more than to gratify a disposition for talking, they agree to unite their powers against the resisting town; this sharpens the wits of the citizens, who, by way of palliating matters, propose a match between the Dauphin and Lady Blanche, a Spanish princess, nearly related to England; which matter being, like all other state marriages, concluded by sudden consent of parties, without any appeal to love,

King John.

love, the gates of Angiers are thrown open, and our two kings enter in friendly terms. John promising to alleviate the pain such a coalition must give Constance, by creating young Arthur Duke of Brittany, and giving him the Town of Angiers.

Here Falconbridge is again left alone to descant upon the late transactions, which he does with keen and just satire; there is a sort of word-catching in this soliloquy, some of the ideas are incumbered with superfluous expression, and the auditor's conception is fatigued with blameable obscurity; notwithstanding which faults, we allow it to contain useful thoughts and lamentable truths, respecting the influence interest has upon the highest as well as lowest characters of life.

In the first scene of the third act, as it has been rightly settled by the ablest editors, Constance appears, possessed of strong and natural resentment against the French monarch, for entering into pacific connections with her enemy King John; she rather rates Lord Salisbury for bringing her the news, and when he proposes her going into the royal presence, she replies with disdainful refusal, prostrating herself, and making the ground her throne, as she phrases it.

Just returned from the Dauphin's nuptials, the two kings encounter this monument of grief. Upon Philip's mention that so happy a day shall each annual return be kept a holy one, she rises, and vents her passion with much bitterness of expression; her widow's curse in the following terms is awfully nervous, and judiciously introduced by the author, as prophetic of what follows,

Arm,

King John.

Arm, arm, ye heav'ns, against these perjur'd kings,
 A widow cries, be husband to me heav'n :
 Let not the hours of this ungodly day
 Wear out the day in peace, but ere sun set
 Set armed discord 'twixt these perjur'd kings.

Her reproaches to boasting Austria are of a very stinging nature, and the Bastard's continuation of them sharpens their pointedness exceedingly. Mr. POPE, and other commentators, have added some lines to make the Bastard's behaviour more justifiable ; but, if we consider what passes in the second Act, we find that Falconbridge indulges a general blunt oddity, that even treads close upon the heels of majesty ; indeed, mention of Austria's having killed his father, is very proper to lay the foundation of hearted resentment.

Pandulph, legate from the Pope, consequently in those days a mischief-making priest, here enters ; and, in terms of peremptory demand, enquires why the then Archbishop of Canterbury was deprived of his see : to this King John replies with very becoming independency of spirit, but we think in rather too harsh terms ; dignity never sits with grace upon abuse. The thunderbolt of papal authority, excommunication, here issues from the enraged cardinal, who urges King Philip to support the church's quarrel against John ; which, after some tolerable resistance, and some well principled arguments, he is at last persuaded to by the churchman's able sophistry. This occasions instantaneous declarations of hostility, and so very conveniently are both armies situated, that without a single line to give time for preparation, the battle joins. We apprehend
 that

that the cardinal and Constance might have been^{King John.} furnished with something to say, that would have been not only interesting but of use, to give some trace of probability to the time of action.

After some martial flourishes, Falconbridge enters, as conqueror of Austria ; we think the lion's skin as a trophy of honour worn by his father, should be worn by the Bastard through the remainder of the play. King John having taken Prince Arthur prisoner, commits him to the care of Hubert ; here a few more alarms succeed, and the English monarch beats the French behind the scenes ; after which he comes on with the Queen Mother, &c. orders Falconbridge to haste for England, there to raise against his coming taxes or contributions from the several orders of clergy.

We do not know any passage, in any piece, that can boast merit superior to the method King John takes of working Hubert to the destruction of Arthur. His diffidence, his soothing, his breaks, pauses, and distant hints, are most descriptive lines of nature in such a depraved state of agitation. What follows we think so rich a regale for poetical taste, that we should deem ourselves very blameable not to offer it to the reader's palate.

The sun is in the heav'n, and the proud day
 Attended with the pleasures of the world,
 Is all too wanton and too full of gawds
 To grant me audience—if the *midnight* bell
 Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,
 Sound one unto the drowfy race of night :
 If this same were a church-yard where we stand,
 And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs :
 Or if that surly spirit melancholly

Had

King John.

Had *baked* thy blood, and made it heavy, thick ;
Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,
Making that idiot laughter keep men's eyes,
And strain their cheeks to idle merriment ;
A passion hateful to my purposes :
Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
Hear me without ears and make reply,
Without a tongue—using conceit alone—
Then in despite of broad-ey'd watchful day
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.

Notwithstanding the approbation we allow to that general excellence which distinguishes this speech, yet we cannot avoid remarking the two words distinguished by Italics. One o'clock in the *morning*, cannot with propriety be stiled the *midnight* bell---The word *solemn* would remove this objection---*Had baked thy blood* ; to us it appears that melancholy is a cold, chilling disposition of mind ; *baked* furnishes an idea of heat, therefore we would substitute *cooked*, as more consonant to the meaning.

After King John has wrought up Hubert to his murderous purpose, and goes for England, the audience still remain in France, to hear Philip lament the effects of his late defeat ; and Constance breath deep lamentation for the captivity of her son. The unhappy mother's complaints are extremely forceable and tender ; yet, amongst many beauties, we must object to that speech wherein she speaks of the courtship of death, in such figurative extravagance. When Constance and the French king retire, Pandolph works on the Dauphin by some arguments of deep and probable policy, to retrieve his own honour and that of France, by undertaking the invasion of England ; furnishing warm hopes of suc-

King John.

cess from the internal disquiets of King John's government, especially those of the enraged clergy, plundered by that monarch's order---A most alarming circumstance to churchmen, who, notwithstanding they preach up contempt of this world, are peculiarly remarkable for coveting and holding fast its riches.

At the beginning of the fourth act, humanity encounters the painful circumstance of Hubert's commission to burn out Arthur's eyes, to prevent, by the Ottoman method, his succession or advancement to the throne; this scene, with respect to the young prince's part of it, does our author great credit; he has most happily traced nature, and has touched the tender feelings in a powerful manner, without straining them too much. Hubert's reluctance and pity are well described, the two characters impress an audience with compassion and esteem, insomuch, that tears of concern and satisfaction alternately flow.

When King John acquaints his peers with his second coronation, the Lords Salisbury and Pembroke express themselves in very free terms concerning that measure: the latter complains of Arthur's imprisonment, and claims his enlargement, which the monarch consents to, as supposing him dispatched. Here Hubert enters, and tells the king that his order has been fulfilled: when Salisbury and Pembroke are told of Arthur's death, they utter some expressions of vindictive discontent, and leave the king to consider his perturbed, ticklish situation. At this point of time a messenger enters, and increases his embarrassment, by an account of the French invasion, and his mother's death. The warlike operations of this play are conducted with

King John.

astonishing rapidity, for King John, between the first and second acts, carried an army to France, which he landed before the French king heard of it ; and between the third and fourth, the Dauphin lands a formidable power before the English know any thing of his approach. After Falconbridge is dispatched to sooth the discontented lords, Hubert re-enters, to acquaint the king of some prodigies which have appeared, and the popular confusion occasioned by Arthur's death ; his description, particularly in the latter part, has singular merit. The guilty monarch's recriminating upon one he supposes a ready agent to his sanguine orders, is highly natural ; the wicked always endeavour to lighten the oppressive load of a bad conscience, by throwing part of it upon another : Hubert's exculpation of himself comes favourably from the actor, but has more plausibility than truth ; for his assertion of a mind free from the taint of any murderous thought, is contradicted by the readiness with which he understood and coincided with John's meaning ; to have rendered him truly amiable, some passages might have been added to signify, that he only undertook the horrid charge to save young Arthur ; at present he is left a very dubious or rather culpable character.

The unhappy young prince, raised to a state of desperation by his captivity, and other painful circumstances, appears on the battlements of his prison, and resolves upon attempting an escape ; but by the fall puts an end to his life. The discontented English peers going to meet the Dauphin now enter, and are accosted by Falconbridge with message from the king, which they receive with

haughty terms. Upon seeing Arthur's body, their wrath grows more enflamed, and a solemn vow of vengeance is entered into.

Hubert, with a second message from the king, and intelligence that the prince is alive, comes in, when a warm altercation ensues; being shewn the corpse of Arthur, Hubert pathetically asserts his own innocence, yet cannot gain credit from the lords, who openly avouch their design of joining the Dauphin: even Falconbridge seems struck with Arthur's fate, and speaks his doubts of Hubert. The picture he draws of the reigning political confusion, is nervous and striking, and merits being offered to the reader, but that we have already exceeded in this play the proposed limits of quotation.

At the beginning of the fifth act, we meet an incident utterly disgraceful to English annals, King John's resignation of his crown, and receiving it from Pandulph, as a mean dependancy on the Pope. His situation might politically require such a concession, but any man of even tolerable spirit would rather have died than shame an exalted station so basely; in return for the English monarch's submission, the cardinal goes to stop the Dauphin's hostile operations. Here the Bastard enters with intelligence that seems to stagger John, whose embarrassment gives Falconbridge an opportunity of remonstrating with great spirit and fire, especially against Pandulph's palliative commission; his arguments so far prevail, that he receives the royal authority to repel force by force.

In the next scene a solemn compact is entered into between the Dauphin and the English lords. Up-
on

King John.

on the cardinal's appearance, and the communication of his pacific disposition, the prince, with very becoming judgment and spirit, declines being propertied by the churchman ; who considers no further than as circumstances relate to his master the Pope. During this parley, Falconbridge demands conference, in which he supports with soldierly demeanour, the dignity of his king and native land ; however, he loses the gentleman in some of his remarks, particularly where he poorly and indelicately puns upon the beating of drums ; bluntness and rudeness are very distinct operations of temper ; good sense approves the first, but condemns the last.

A battle here ensues, during which King John appears, labouring under a heavy indisposition. Some tidings of great importance are brought by a messenger, but though of the favourable kind, the sick monarch cannot relish them, but desires to be conveyed to Swinstead Abbey.

We are now conveyed to the French camp, where we meet Salisbury, Pembroke, &c. in a state of surprise, at the strength, number, and success of King John's arms ; to fill them with more astonishment and confusion, Melun, a French count, who has received his death's wound, acquaints them with the Dauphin's design of cutting off all the revolters who have joined him, in case of victory ; this determines them upon an immediate return to their allegiance, of which the Dauphin is informed, as well as of the fate his expected supplies have met, of being wrecked upon the Goodwin Sands ; however, he bears up with resolution, and determines to stand the issue of another battle.

A scene

King John.

A scene merely expletive, occurs between Falconbridge and Hubert, which is, and we think with justice, generally omitted in representation; however, Hubert's account of the king's being poisoned, should be retained, and might come well enough from Salisbury or Pembroke, just before John's entrance.

We have now brought royalty to the last thread of life, and are sorry to be under the necessity of observing, that our author has not displayed his usual force of genius in what the expiring monarch says; his speeches are too figurative for one in great pain, and are otherwise far short of the circumstances; he resigns his breath too in a manner very unfavourable for stage action; though a most abandoned politician, not one pang of a guilty conscience is mentioned, which even in the midst of distraction, seldom fails to shew itself.

The king no more, Falconbridge, with commendable spirit, urges union of forces, to expel the Dauphin and his invading powers; however, it appears, that losses and disappointments have obliged that prince to concur in Pandulph's pacific plan, which the English lords and prince Henry seem ready to admit. This draws our piece to a conclusion, and the whole is summed up with this excellent and truly British remark, uttered by Falconbridge.

Come, the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them!—nought shall make us
rue
If England to itself do prove but true.

In

King John.

In writing this play, SHAKESPEARE disclaimed every idea of regularity, and has huddled such a series of historical events on the back of one another, as shame the utmost stretch of probability; his muse travels lightning winged, being here, there, and every where, in the space of a few minutes. We are by no means advocates for that pinching limitation which so disadvantageously fetters modern composition; imagination will indulge several trespasses of liberty, but must be offended when all the bounds of conception are arbitrarily trodden under foot.

In point of characters King John is a very disagreeable picture of royalty; ambitious and cruel; not void of spirit in the field, yet irresolute and mean in adversity; covetous, overbearing and impolitic; from what we can observe, totally unprincipled; strongly tainted with the opposite appellations which often meet, fool and knave; during his life we have nothing to admire, at his fall nothing to pity.

There is no capital character within our knowledge of more inequality; the greater part of what he has to say is a heavy yoke on the shoulders of an actor. His two scenes with Hubert are indeed masterly, and do the author credit; like charity they may serve to cover a multitude of sins; the dying scene is not favourable to action.

Mr. QUIN was the first we remember to see figure away in royal John; and, as in most of his tragedy undertakings, he lumbered through the part in a painful manner; growled some passages, bellowed others, and chaunted the rest. Mr. CHURCHILL has sneered at Mr. Mossop for brow-beating the French king;

King John.

king; had he seen and remembered the gentleman under consideration, he would have thought the poor tame monarch in danger of being swallowed up alive by his voracious brother of England. Mr. SHERIDAN has, no doubt, impaired as his faculties are at present, very striking merit, where he is working Hubert to the murder of the prince; his utterance and attendant looks are highly picturesque. We allow him to be also deserving of praise where he upbraids Hubert with so readily obeying his bloody orders; but in the other scenes of the four first acts, low as they are, he sinks beneath them; in dying, he overacts to a degree of particular offence.

Mr. Mossop, whom we have been obliged to find fault with upon several occasions, here deserves our warmest praise, and we are happy to give it him. That stiffness and premeditated method which, in other characters, took off from his great powers and good conception, being less visible in his *King John*. The rays of glowing merit here broke upon us unclouded and dazzling; where the author's genius soared aloft, he kept pace with equal wing; where Shakespeare flagged, he bore him up; wherefore, we are venturous enough to affirm, that no performer ever made more of good and bad materials mingled together, than Mr. Mossop did in this play. Mr. POWELL was too boyish, he wanted weight and depth of expression to excel in *John*.

Of the chip-in-pottage French king, we shall say nothing, as no actor can make any thing of him; nor can his son, for the like reason, deserve much notice. However, we remember two performers that are worth mention, one Mr. LACY, who did
in

King John.

in the Dauphin than criticism had any right to expect; and Mr. THE. CIBBER, who was undoubtedly the veriest bantam-cock of tragedy that ever crowed, strutted, and flapped its wings on a stage.

The Cardinal is a very well drawn churchman of those times, subtle, proud, irascible; rather prone to promote than prevent public calamities, where his master's interest seems concerned; a mere politician, not incumbered with delicacy of principle, or the feelings of humanity; he is not in favour of the actor, yet appeared very respectable in Mr. HARVARD'S performance of him, no other person strikes our recollection.

The Bastard is a character of great peculiarity, bold, spirited, free---indeed too free spoken; he utters many noble sentiments, and performs brave actions; but in several places descends to keep attention from drowsing, at the expence of all due decorum; and what is very disgraceful to serious composition, causes the weaker part of an audience to laugh at some very weak, punning conceits.

Mr. RYAN had some merit in this part, by no means equal to what he shewed in many others. The unhappy impediment of his utterance being more conspicuous in it than usual.

Mr. SHERIDAN has apologized for it, but from what we have already said concerning his executive abilities, the reader may easily judge how very unlike the character he must be. Mr. HOLLAND was too stiff, and made too much use of his strong lungs. Mr. SMITH is pretty and spirited, but wants weight and bluntness. We have seen one Mr. FLEETWOOD appear in it this season, at the Haymarket, with eve-

ry fault of Mr. HOLLAND improved, and all his strokes of merit diminished.

If ever Mr. GARRICK's figure made against him, it was in this part; he struck out some lights and beauties which we never discovered in the performance of any other person, but there was a certain petitness which rather shrunk the character, and cut short the usual excellence of this truly great actor. Upon the whole, we are obliged to declare, that our idea of the Bastard and SHAKESPEARE's meaning, to our knowledge, has never been properly filled. Mr. BARRY, for external appearance and general execution, comes nearest the point. This remark may serve to shew, that though we greatly admire, and have hitherto warmly praised our English Roscius, we are not so idolatrously fond of his extensive merit, as to think him always foremost in the race of fame.

Hubert, though upon the whole an agreeable agent, is by no means an estimable personage; he appears in a very recommendatory light, and favours representation where there are any tolerable feelings. Messrs. SPARKS and BERRY did him very considerable justice, and Mr. BENSLEY has exhibited him with deserved approbation; we cannot say so much for Mr. GIBSON. At the Haymarket, Mr. GENTLEMAN has passed muster, as not having misconceived or ill expressed the part; but we cannot, as a public performer, congratulate him much on the happiness of his figure or features.

Prince Arthur is a very amiable and interesting character of the drama; we have seen it done affectingly by several children, whose names we forget; however recollect being particularly pleased with

King John.

with Miss REYNOLDS, now Mrs. SAUNDERS, some twenty years since.

Who did the revolting lords has entirely escaped our memory, except at Mr. FOOTE's, this summer, and those gentlemen who personated them there may wish to be forgot also.

Every one of the female characters are too contemptible for notice except Constance; she indeed seems to have been an object of great concern with the author, and very seldom fails to make a deep impression upon the audience; her circumstances are peculiarly calculated to strike the feeling heart; dull, very dull must that sensation be which is not affected with the distress of a tender parent, expressed in such pathetic, forceable terms; even Mrs. WOFFINGTON, who, from dissonance of tones might be called the screech-owl of tragedy, drew many tears in this part; to which her elegant figure and adequate deportment did not a little contribute. A fine woman robed with grief, is a leading object of pity.

Mrs. CIBBER, in the whole scope of her great excellence, never shewed her tragic feelings and expression to more advantage than in Constance; there was a natural tendency to melancholly in her features, which heightened in action, and became so true an index of a woe-fraught mind, that with the assistance of her nightingale voice, she became irresistible; and almost obliged us to forget every other character in raptured contemplation of her merit.

Mrs. BELLAMY fell far, very far short of the fore-mentioned lady, and cathedralized the unhappy princess offensively. Mrs. YATES and Mrs. BARRY,

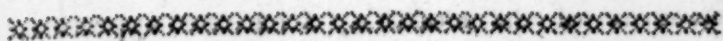
have both powerful capabilities for the part, but can never justly hope to equal their great predecessor Mrs. CIBBER, who must be always remembered with pleasure and regret by all persons of taste, who had the happiness to shed the sacrifice of tears at the shrine of her melting powers. Mrs. PHILIPPINA BURTON was indubitably deplorable.

The shameful irregularity of plot we have already remarked; in the characters there is variety. The Bastard is an original and pleasing oddity, though somewhat upon the extravaganza; the language is bold, flowing, and, where it ought to be, pathetic; yet in many places too figurative, obscure and turgid. As to moral, there seems to be no other deduction but this; that King John's crimes having merited his fate, the justice of providential dispensation is thereby vindicated. This play wants much alteration to make it quite agreeable on the stage, and is at present we think a better reading than acting piece.

Before we dismiss this tragedy, permit us to offer a short anecdote related by a gentleman who saw it performed at Portsmouth last war. The French party coming on with white cockades, a zealous tar shouts from the gallery, Harkee, you Mr. Mounseers, strike the white flags out of your nabs, or b--- my eyes, but I'll bombard you. A general laugh went through the house, but the actors deeming it merely a transient joke, took no notice; upon which, our enraged son of Neptune gave the word fire, and immediately half a dozen apples flew, which worked the desired effect; three cheers ensued, and this incident diffused such a spirit through the house, that during the rest of the play loud huzza's attended the exits and entrances of King John's party,

King John.

party, while King Philip and the Dauphin, notwithstanding the polite removal of their cockades, sustained many rough strokes of sea wit,



The H Y P O C R I T E.

A COMEDY altered from CIBBER:

By Mr. BICKERSTAFF.

NOTwithstanding the *Now Juror* did its author great credit in its original state, yet we must cordially applaud the design of turning it into the present form. The laureat's satire was political, the objects of which being now almost forgotten, it became obsolete; besides, we always looked on the old piece as heavy for want of such seasoning as is mingled with this alteration, which we are now about to consider.

It opens with a scene between Sir John Lambert and the Colonel, his son, who is expostulating warmly against the influence allowed to Dr. Cantwell: Sir John, the weak proselyte of enthusiasm, backs his own opinion with some passion, and much prejudice. The conversation turning upon Mr. Darnley's addresses to Charlotte, the baronet objects to that gentleman, as not being pious enough for a son-in-law; and being told of his coming to obtain final consent, the father determines to go out that he may

Hypocrite.

may avoid seeing him ; declaring, at the same time, that he has another man in view to marry his daughter. Colonel Lambert is startled at this information, and seems to apprehend it may be some favourite of the Doctor's. Charlotte appearing, he opens the subject ; from her natural vivacity she sports with his grave beginning, till he calls her a giddy *devil* ; we wish the last word had been changed for a politer one ; a lady may, by an extravagant admirer, be called a *saint*, and that's sufficiently ridiculous, but in pleasantry to stile one a *fiend*, is not a mark of good breeding ; we know there are precedents, but they don't invalidate our objection, which lies as much against lack of meaning as indelicacy.

On being told that her father is violently against the match with Darnley, the young lady expresses satisfaction, as she seems to think that difficulties render an amour more engaging : her contempt of the addition her fortune may receive from Sir John's consent, is spirited, and declaring herself a fine woman, pleasant. When the Colonel mentions that Sir John has a person in his eye for her, she, with the true feelings of coquetry, enquires who it is, and appears to find great pleasure from the idea of an additional lover. We have a strong objection to what this lady says when pressed to a single attachment in Darnley's favour, notwithstanding the passage always creates a laugh ; the comparison of herself to an *empty house to let*, is at least vulgar and trite, if not licentious ; it is mere gallery wit.

Charlotte, by slipping out an observation of Darnley's being rather jealous in his temper, shews that he claims some degree of her notice, which the Colonel
remarks ;

Hypocrite.

remarks : her lover enters, and for some time she pretends not to perceive him, but repeats, as if in soliloquy, some poetical lines ; the lover presses to gain her attention. At last, he makes rather a peevish remark, and draws upon himself some spirited raillery ; this gives him a turn, which we think of an ungracious cast. Mention of a rival agitates Darnley very much, and he makes eager enquiry concerning who the person is ; the Colonel suggesting that it is probably somebody of Cantwell's recommendation, the lover seems to think the Doctor is his friend ; Charlotte here takes an odd turn, and makes a whimsical exit, very advantageous to a capable actress.

After his sister is gone, the Colonel assures Darnley of being in his mistress's favour ; and hints, that if Sir John's consent can be obtained, the Doctor may be brought over by young Lady Lambert, who apparently has great interest over him, and as supposed from amorous motives ; this inclination of the Hypocrite for his patron's wife, is going to be accounted for, when the explanation is stopped by the appearance of Lady Lambert, Seyward, and the Doctor. Cantwell sets off in the true methodistical stile of self accusation ; and observing, that he is maintained too luxuriously for his spiritual welfare, declares his intention of quitting the family for a less sensual situation : such an irreparable loss shocks her ladyship, who reprobates herself also, and therefore intreats his stay upon the tenderest terms of persuasion, to promote her thorough reformation.

The Colonel returns with Darnley, when, after reciprocal salutation, the wickedness of going to plays is brought in view, and the old lady warmly
seconds

seconds her ghostly guide. Some words arising between the Colonel and Cantwell, the former reproves the latter's insolence with becoming spirit, which sacrilegious violence drives off her ladyship, filled with apprehensions of some extraordinary punishment for such violence to so pious a character; and the Doctor himself retires, with threatening to acquaint Sir John. A few speeches intervene, respecting the manner of his getting into the family, when he returns, following Charlotte, who seems to be much offended at his intrusion upon her; the Colonel and her lover also, both express resentment at his bolting into her room, without any previous notice; the Doctor pleads Sir John's authority for what he has done, and deports himself with much haughtiness; Charlotte being questioned as to the particular offence she has received, gives a pleasant, but we think reprehensible account of it.

In the following part of this scene, Charlotte again indulges her sportive humour with Darnley, whose patience is put to severe trial; however, at last, she gives him leave to hope. They are interrupted and surprized by the entrance of Sir John, who, without uttering one syllable, takes his daughter off the stage in a very abrupt manner: this Colonel Lambert imputes to the Doctor, and laments the weakness of a father, whose disposition and understanding are naturally good; however, he hints having a thought that may prevent the Hypocrite's bringing ruin on the family: so ends the first act.

By a soliloquy of Seyward's, at the beginning of the second, we find he is deeply in Cantwell's secret transactions; and he mentions one of his villainous designs, which appears to be no other than

Hypocrite.

than cutting off Charlotte, by a deed of settlement, with a shilling, unless she marries him. It appears, that Seyward is shocked at this knavery, and stimulated by a passion he has conceived for the young lady, determines upon using his power to prevent the pernicious settlement from being perfected. Sir John enters, and sends Seyward off to transcribe hymns for his supposed uncle, the pious Doctor.

Upon Charlotte's speaking in favourable terms of Seyward's good breeding and neatness, her father upbraids her with not considering a man's real merit; from whence, after some grave, preparatory speeches, he explains his intention, and proposes the Doctor, not by name, but descriptively; the young lady rallies, her father's notions of life and matrimony in a sensible and agreeable manner. At length, when he orders her to think no more of Darnley, and plumply names Cantwell, she bursts into a horse-laugh; then growing serious, suggests an objection which, as she rightly observes, is with fathers in general a weighty one, the Doctor's want of fortune; however, Sir John intimates a design of giving him one. The baronet being called by a message from his spiritual guide, Charlotte confesses to her step-mother, young Lady Lambert, painful apprehension of her father's doing any thing that may impair the fortune of her brother, the Colonel, who, upon being informed that his sister is destined for Cantwell, is so enraged, that he hints to Lady Lambert the Doctor's passion for her, which, upon being pressed, she acknowledges to have perceived. What Colonel Lambert says about the Turkey-cocks, might as well have been omitted; the characters

are too serious for joking here; besides, the idea conveyed is not very suitable to modest ladies.

When the Colonel hears of his father's intention of settling a fortune on his chaplain, he thinks it time to lay some plan for the Hypocrite's destruction, and this he throws upon Lady Lambert, requesting her to encourage the Doctor's address, from which he will devise the means of overturning all his schemes and influence; this she promises to consider of. The Colonel then goes off upon an appointment to meet Darnley.

Old Lady Lambert enters, and complains of Charlotte's wearing thin lace over her breast, as Dr. Cantwell deems it indecent; Charlotte gives her opinion of the supposed faint in pretty tart terms, yet the old lady perseveres, and makes the following truly characteristical remark: "How has he weaned me from temporal connections; my heart is now set upon nothing sublunary, and I thank heaven, I am now so insensible to every thing in this limbo of vanity, that I could see you, my son, my daughters, my brothers, my grand children, all expire before me, and mind it no more than the going out of so many snuffs of candle." There never was a better picture of methodistical philosophy, which annihilates every trace of social feelings to a mistaken, ridiculous spirituality.

Sir John and Cantwell join the old lady, when the baronet, with much seeming anxiety of mind, begs of his mother to join in soliciting the Doctor to stay in his family, from whence the dear creature pretends to go, as thinking himself obnoxious to Sir John's children, consequently the cause of animosities and disturbances amongst the family: this plausible

Hypocrite.

plausible humiliation of mind, plays a deep game of policy, especially where he proposes to return Sir John his deed of settlement, and seems to lament the Colonel's perilous, reprobate situation. Charlotte being mentioned, Cantwell imputes her refusal to female modesty, and thinks she may be wrought upon, but advises that the matter may rest awhile.

Maw-worm, a new character, and one of the select, is introduced ; as laughable and well-drawn a personage as we know. This ignorant, melancholly sprig of enthusiasm, is most exquisitely delineated, and calls powerfully on the risible faculties ; if it was not too great an infringement upon our due bounds, we would transcribe the whole of this excellent scene ; to give only a part would be injurious, for there is an admirable connection of pleasantries, the jokes and blunders happily arising out of each other. It is much to be lamented that there are so many Maw-worms in real life.

After old Lady Lambert departs, Cantwell gives Seyward some papers, with an observation to lay them where they may be soon found, as he shall have occasion for them in the afternoon. This furnishes Seyward with an idea that matters are ripening fast, so he determines to acquaint Charlotte ; she appears, reading Pope's Homer, and asks some questions concerning the original, of which she knows two words. Upon repeating them, and desiring an explanation, Seyward applies them to his own purpose, speaking both the original and translation with such a glow of amorous emphasis, that Charlotte takes notice of it. In what follows, he discovers to her, that Cantwell, though supposed his uncle, is not really so ; then pathetically tells his

Hypocrite.

situation, lamenting that he has joined in any of the Doctor's vile schemes, even by connivance. Charlotte perceives in the progress of their interview, that Seyward loves her : when he has acquainted her with the deed of settlement, containing a proviso of four thousand pounds for her in case she marries the Doctor, and a total disinheritance of her brother, her volatility vanishes ; she feels seriously, and requesting the deed from Seyward, she concludes the act, with desiring him to meet her at a lawyer's in the Temple.

At the beginning of the third act we are introduced into Charlotte's dressing-room, where she is acquainted by Betty, her maid, that Mr. Darnley had been to enquire for her, and seemed uneasy at her not being at home, which she interprets into jealousy, and resolves to teize him. At this unlucky moment he comes, and meets with so whimsical a reception, that he remarks upon it ; the collision of conversation of two lovers is described here with spirit, a good deal of acid, as Lady Townly calls it, is mingled, and Charlotte very justly mortifies the impatience of her gallant. At length the subject is waved, and Darnley informs his mistress that he has heard from Colonel Lambert, Sir John's design of espousing her to the Doctor ; here the *amantium iræ* breaks out again, and poor Darnley is wound up to a pitiable pitch of uneasiness ; he makes an effort to shake off her power, but she plays him so very judiciously, that he turns soft, and almost melts her.

When brought to a very critical point of feeling, Seyward's entrance gives Charlotte a very seasonable pause : what she says to that young man again alarms Darnley's jealousy, who questions him what business he has with the lady. Colonel Lambert

Hypocrite.

enters, and finding his friend strongly agitated, kindly endeavours to talk him into a calm, promises his assistance, and appoints a meeting in the Park : Charlotte re-enters, and the Colonel assumes his friend's business directly, but cannot bring his sister to any satisfactory explanation.

Young Lady Lambert appears, says she has desired a conference with Cantwell, and mentions her determination to give a good account of him. At sight of the Doctor, Charlotte and her brother retire: after a well conducted tete-a-tete with the lady, wherein the lamblike wolf plainly shews his iniquitous design upon his patron's wife, the Colonel rushes precipitately in, and menaces discovery to his father; Cantwell, with quick policy, turns his meaning to the love he has for Charlotte. During this confusion Sir John enters, and is told by his son of the Doctor's paying addresses to Lady Lambert; this gives the factified knave an opportunity of working upon the baronet's credulity, with all the plausible address of hypocrisy, and so far triumphs, that Sir John in rage forbids the Colonel his house. Here Cantwell's Christian charity artfully interposes in favour of his enemy, and he proposes a reconciliation, which the Colonel very properly declines; this confirms Sir John in respect of the settlement, and gives the Doctor a plea for accepting it, which he declares is only as a trustee.

Seyward and Charlotte begin the fourth act; by their conversation we are informed that a deed has been signed in presence of the former, who, for his friendly interposition, is promised favour with regard to his own circumstances; however, he hints that interest was not his motive so much as love :
the

the young lady's treatment of him here shews a good understanding, and a candid mind; she commends his modesty, avows a previous passion, and recommends avoiding to play, moth like, about a flame which may be fatal.

After a very characteristic soliloquy, Lady Lambert informs Charlotte that the Doctor, by Sir John's express desire, is coming to be his own advocate for her favour: being introduced by Betty, the chambermaid, Cantwell opens the interview with observing, that he considers himself as a person not very agreeable to Charlotte, which opinion she most cordially confirms; after receiving her contemptuous treatment of him with much composure, he acquaints her that she must not marry without his consent; then causes her to confess an inclination for Darnley, and modestly offers to favour that proposal, in case she gives up half the four thousand pounds allotted for her by Sir John; this she comes into, and receives warning from Cantwell not to attempt any prejudice against him, as any thing of that nature must retort upon herself. When he is gone off, a short scene occurs, wherein the Colonel informs his sister of having laid the foundation of Cantwell's overthrow. Darnley appears; after some strokes of amorous dalliance, he relates what has been done in Seyward's affair, and how far the Doctor's villainy is detected. The young lady, with much good nature, recommends Seyward to her lover's patronage, and he with great gentility promises it. The Colonel returning unseen, hears his sister still trifling with her gallant, and interposes, going so far as even to fix a wedding-day for her; and, at length, he so far prevails, that she gives her hand

Hypocrite.

hand to Darnley, and taking the gallant into another chamber, the fourth act is concluded.

We meet the lady and her swain at the beginning of the fifth act, conversing upon the bargain she has provisionally made with Cantwell for his consent, which Darnley seems willing to fulfil. Sir John joins them, and after apologizing for his abrupt behaviour, enters upon the topic of his daughter's marriage; he acknowledges the Doctor has quitted his claim, yet still seems determined to have him for a son-in-law. Charlotte, warmed with indignation, lays a heavy charge against the Doctor, and being provoked by her father's obstinate credulity, declares her resolution to marry Darnley at all events. Charlotte's earnestness, and his lady's proposition of giving him ocular demonstration, make him consent to stand behind a screen, while Lady Lambert gives his hypocritical favourite an audience.

When the fair spoken son of impiety appears, her ladyship, with powerful artifice, seems apprehensive of another surprize, and cautions him to fasten the doors; then enters upon the declaration of love he has made, and plainly intimates, that it was not only acceptable, but very agreeable to her. Thus she lures him on till he comes to the point, and goes so far as to say openly, that he can lead Sir John by the nose; here the enraged baronet rushes forwards, and loads him with just accusations, which Cantwell strives for some time to throw off by calm evasion; but, being pressed, fires into resentment, and advertising to the deed of settlement, desires Sir John to walk out of his house. While matters are in this state, Maw-worm and old Lady Lambert enter; upon the baronet's telling his mother that the

Doctor

Hypocrite.

Doctor is a villain, some very ludicrous remarks drop from his disciple, who wont believe any thing to his prejudice. Charlotte, in a fright, acquaints her father that she apprehends murder, as the Doctor was heard at high words with Seyward, and immediately after a pistol went off. This matter is soon cleared up by Seyward ; after which Cantwell is going off, but Colonel Lambert meets him with a tipstaff, properly attended, and delivers him into custody. Even in this situation of conviction and dilemma, his insolence continues, and he boasts of being master of the house: in this, however, he is defeated, by having a deed quite the reverse of what he imagines ; here he is carried off, we think with too much tameness on his side : the old lady and Maw-worm go off, not convinced.

After the hero is thus disposed of, the piece is brought to an excellent conclusion by the following speech, delivered by Charlotte, when Sir John, in the heat of his vexation says, that henceforth he shall hold in abhorrence every thing which bears the appearance of piety : “Nay now, dear sir, I must take the liberty to tell you, you carry things too far, and go from one extreme to another---What? because a worthless wretch has imposed upon you, under the fallacious shew of austere grimace, will you needs have it every body is like him, confound the good with the bad, and conclude there are no truly religious in the world? Leave, my dear sir, such rash conclusions to fools and libertines ; let us be careful to distinguish between virtue and the appearance of it ; guard, if possible, against doing honour to hypocrisy ; but, at the same time, let us allow there is no character in life greater or more valuable, than
that

Hypocrite.

that of the truly devout ; nor any thing more noble or more beautiful, than the fervour of a sincere piety."

The plot of this play is regular, and sufficiently intricate without being improbable or obscure ; the incidents are well ranged, an agreeable suspense is properly kept up, and the catastrophe gratifies every liberal mind ; the characters, which exhibit variety within natural bounds, we shall, according to the rule of this work, consider separately.

Sir John Lambert is possessed of that kind of weakness which designing men work on at pleasure : enthusiasm flourishes, and indeed can only exist in flexible understandings ; it is a weed that like thistles among corn, destroys the noblest harvest of the mind. The baronet appears to be a very well-meaning man, a good husband, and a tender father ; yet, under the abominable influence of a canting knave, seems ready to violate every principle of those two leading characters in the social compact. In representation this baronet is neither for nor against the actor, and we presume ourselves right when we think as well of Mr. PACKER, as of any body else that could be put into the part.

Darnley appears to be possessed of good qualities, but has a taint of suspicion and impatience in his temper by no means agreeable. Charlotte's method of making him feel his failing is sensible, and occasions much pleasantry. The circumstances he is placed in are not very desirable to a performer, and therefore we could wish that so estimable an actor as Mr. REDDISH was eased of him : that gentleman, by being a little spared, would rise faster in public estimation ; besides, we don't conceive Darnley to

be in his stile of acting. It is no doubt a compliment and advantage to an author to have as many capital performers in his drama as possible, but it is rather severe upon one who stands in the first light, to be either put out of or below his sphere.

Colonel Lambert is a free, sensible, spirited gentleman, who has so little personal concern with the piece, that he might easily be cut out and not be much missed ; however, he is not at all a disagreeable object, and we wish he was in the hands of some person possessing more vivacity than Mr. JEFFERSON.

Seyward is a very amiable young person, whose sentiments we approve, and whose situation we pity ; the circumstance of his love is at best but trifling, and vanishes we know not how ; it might have been omitted, and then the part he acts against Cantwell, coming from disinterested honesty, would place him in a fairer degree of praise. We remember to have seen Mr. PALMER do this part in the original play, with much more feeling and propriety than Mr. CAUTHERLY manifests in it at present, not but we allow the latter to be very tolerable, as acting goes at present ; Mr. Ross was much the best.

Doctor Cantwell, much more emphatically called Wolf, by CIBBER, is a very high finished piece of villainy ; proud, avaricious, sensual, ungrateful and hypocritical ; one who sacrifices conscience, honesty and religion, to the basest, underhand purposes ; a monster in nature, and a disgrace to the human race. We remember to have heard a very sensible remark from a liberal, moral judge of mankind, that chaplains in general, of every religion, have oftner promoted domestic confusion than piety ; and we cannot help highly approving the expression of a Roman

Hypocrite.

man Catholic nobleman, who, during the rebellion of forty-five, shewed himself zealous in the Protestant cause ; upon being asked his reason, he said he liked the present form of government, and wished Popery to be kept out of the kingdom ; for if that prevailed, his chaplains, who now would bear a message for him, would turn the tables, and make him their message carrier. Cantwell is placed in very judicious points of view, to shew the danger of such sanctified vermin, who creep, snake-like, into your bosom, to sting you mortally. His villainy is revealed by just degrees, and his fate is well suited to his deserts.

There is more difficulty in doing this character justice than is commonly imagined, much and strong expression of countenance is requisite, as well as smooth and nervous utterance. We have seen the Doctor personated with great ability and much applause, by both Mr. THE. CIBBER, and Mr. SPARKS ; however, they were both too mechanical, wanting that essential ease and plausibility which makes us give Mr. KING the preference.

Maw-worm we owe to the alterer of this piece, and are highly obliged to him for so rich an improvement of the laureat's production. We are equally obliged to Mr. WESTON for his inimitable support of it : Mr. MOODY once exhibited this risible piece of religious insanity, but we hope never will again ; and Mr. WALDRON was so much out of his depth, when the managers *popped* him, like Mr. FOOTE's Lindamira on for it, that we are amazed the young man was not overwhelmed by the tide of popular displeasure ; if he is held forth as the turtle of low comedy, we beg leave to borrow an

idea from Mr. COLMAN, and assert, he has not one bit of the green fat about him. *Hypocrite.*

We hear Mr. WESTON is gone to Scotland ; is it not amazing and vexatious to all lovers of the drama, that when there is such a lamentable, unparalleled lack of merit, at both houses, two such intrinsic performers as Messrs. WOODWARD and WESTON, should be driven to a northern migration. Is this gratitude to the public ? oh shame !

Old Lady Lambert is also an additional character, of no great consequence, yet well conceived ; as by her we perceive that persons of rank and education are liable to catch the infection of enthusiasm, as well as those of the lower and more uncultivated class. Her ideas of religious purity are diverting, and we have no objection to Mrs. BRADSHAW's method of delivering them ; she maintains the sanctified formality in a very suitable manner.

Her daughter-in-law is a very good, conformable young wife, to an odd kind of an elderly husband ; she seems desirous to promote his happiness and the welfare of his family, but has nothing to say worth notice, and at best can only be considered as an agreeable dandle : Mrs. W. BARRY deserves a better part, and does what she can with this.

Charlotte is undoubtedly the best drawn coquette, and the most defensible one on the stage ; she likes adulation, yet has sincerity enough to own it ; she loves a man, yet has discernment to see his particular failing, and resolution to laugh him pleasantly out of it ; she is ornamented with generosity, sprightliness and wit, nor is her vanity any way offensive. Mrs. WOFFINGTON, in the *Non Juror*, obtained singular applause, not without great merit ;

Hypocrite.

however, there was such an uncharacteristic affectation about her, that some degree of disgust must attend it ; and she marked those passages which had any relish of licentiousness very offensively. Mrs. PRITCHARD had much more ease, and equal spirit of expression ; but was, from corpulence, so very absurd an appearance, that however our ears might be pleased, our eyes were offended. Mrs. ABINGTON being a very agreeable mixture of these ladies, much freer than the former, and more delicate than the latter, fills our idea of Charlotte to every degree of satisfaction. Mr. BICKERSTAFF, in his preface, has paid this accomplished actress a very genteel and just compliment.

As we have observed at the beginning of our criticisms on this piece, the NON JUROR was growing obsolete, it was therefore highly judicious to give the satire a new and more intelligible form : CIBBER's dialogue, though not remarkably correct, is natural, easy, and spirited ; the additions in no shape disgrace him, and there are some omissions which do him credit. Upon the whole, we heartily wish the HYPOCRITE encouragement on the stage, and attention in the closet.



THEODOSIUS.

A TRAGEDY: By LEE.

THE tragedy of THEODOSIUS opens with all the pomp of religious pageantry ; a decorated altar, the figure of Constantine kneeling to an air suspended cross, priests, choristers and music : after a preparatory hymn and chorus, Atticus, the high priest, enters into conference with Leontine, a philosopher. By what passes between them, we find that Theodosius, from a fixed melancholly on his mind, has determined to lay aside the reins of government for holy retirement : Leontine, who had been tutor to him and a Persian prince, called Varanes, delineates these royal characters, and signifies, that the latter, attended by his daughter, is coming on a visit to the former.

Varanes approaching with Athenais they retire ; the short scene which occurs between these lovers, means no more than to declare his warmth of passion and her diffidence, arising from disparity of rank between the heir of empire and a poor philosopher's daughter. The prince's declarations manifest rather an impetuous than a prudent passion. The approach of Theodosius being announced by sound of instruments they retire, and make way for the Emperor, attended by his two sisters, Marina and Flavilla, who have determined to take the veil.

Previous to his spiritual admission, the Imperial devotee confesses to Atticus, in a very pleasing descriptive

Theodosius.

scriptive narration, that love, to an incurable degree, is the cause of that anxiety which exiles him from public life. Leontine pronounces the approach of Varanes, who immediately enters, warmed with the glow of early and sincere friendship; their advertising to the sports of former days, the theatre and the field, is very natural for juvenile, as well as aged minds; what Varanes says of hunting, is poetically imagined and well expressed: the prince uses his endeavours to persuade Theodosius from his purpose; however, seems struck with the awful ceremony of admitting nuns, and by the conclusive speech of the first act, shews as if he was half won over to retirement; the sentiments he utters, and his remark upon the weight that royalty lays on mental freedom, are pretty, but horridly disgraced by rhyme.

At the beginning of the second act, Pulcheria, Theodosius's sister, who is invested with imperial authority, hears the clash of swords, and soon after is accosted by Marcian, a Roman general, who apologizes for quarrelling in the palace, by reciting the particulars of his provocation; in doing of which he throws out many low and indecent observations; these, we presume, the author meant as proofs of martial bluntness, but are in reality absolute breaches of decorum, censurable to the last degree, and the more so as being quite unnecessary; his reflections upon court effeminacy are, no doubt, very natural effusions of an honest mind, irritated by the buzzing, gaudy insects of court sun-shine, and this part of the scene we highly approve.

Openness of expression becomes an honest and brave character, but to bully a lady of exalted station,

tion, as this militarist does, is beyond all bearing, ^{Theodosius,} and we think she sustains his abuse too long; however, at length, becoming spirit breaks forth, and she reproves him in severe terms, at the same time banishing him after three days; there is something whimsical enough in Pulcheria's intimation aside, that he is once to lord it over her. Lucius, upon seeing his friend, the general, droop, at receiving so harsh and sudden a sentence, proposes to assert his cause by force, which Marcian declines, accepting exile and retirement in the following well fancied, well expressed lines.

We'll fly to some far distant lonely village,
 Forget our former state, and breed with slaves;
 Sweat in the eye of day, and when night comes,
 With bodies coarsely filled and vacant souls,
 Sleep like the labour'd hinds and never think.

Athenais and Leontine present themselves, the latter observing, that they have paid the compliment Varanes desired, of attending him to Theodosius's court, proposes returning to Athens; this affects the love-stricken maid, who confesses her uneasiness, and draws from Leontine a doubt of the prince's sincerity, which Athenais cannot admit; however, upon her father's starting the idea of a dishonourable connection, with the just feelings of a chaste reserve, she declares that no consideration, however interesting, not a parent's life in danger, shall impair her virtue; this satisfies the old man, who, upon seeing the prince approach, retires.

By what Varanes says to his friend Arantes at entrance, it appears, that the latter has been advising him against a matrimonial connection, as disgraceful,

Thiodorus.

ful, which he seems to admit in very ungenerous terms; yet, upon seeing Athenais, he renews his vows with great fervour, and in a very bombastic flow of expression declares, that he prefers her to all the Persian greatness. Upon mention of his father's displeasure if he should know of his son's attachment to so inadequate a character, he utters the following beautiful effusion of a fond mind.

No more of this, no more, for I disdain
All pomp when thou art by : far be the noise
Of kings and courts from us ; whose gentle souls
Our kinder stars have steer'd another course;
Free as the forest birds we'll pair together,
Without remembring who our father's were ;
Fly to the arbours, grots, and flow'ry meads,
And in soft murmurs interchange our souls ;
Together drink the chrystal of the stream,
Or taste the yellow fruit which autumn yields ;
And when the golden evening calls us home,
Wing to our downy nest and sleep till morn.

When Athenais mentions a necessity of parting, Varanes takes alarm, which causes her to refer him to Leontine for explanation ; the philosopher ingenuously questions the real meaning of his passion, which throws the prince into confusion ; and being urged to the critical point of marriage, his illiberal pride, getting the better of generosity and truth, occasions him to treat the woman of his heart, and his venerable good old tutor, in a most brutal, contemptuous manner ; Leontine warms into a noble resentment, which forces the hot-brained Persian off in a very disgraceful manner.

Every heart, susceptible of tender feelings, must here sympathize in that painful concern which overwhelms the injured father and slighted maid; the latter of whom acknowledges at large her ardent affection, but nobly resolves to sacrifice it at the shrine of just resentment, and gives her approving fire the most solemn, comfortable assurance, of inviolable virtue; this scene takes strong possession of the tender passions, but concludes with some very enervate, pitiful rhimes.

Varanes, totally repenting his treatment of Athenais, meets Arantes at the beginning of the third act, and communicates his readiness to make her any reparation: being informed that she and her father have left the court, without any trace by which they might be followed, with the utmost violence of anxiety, the hair-brained lover determines upon a personal pursuit, ordering his chariots to meet him in the Hippodrome. In the next scene we are surprized with the conversion of Athenais to Christianity, for which we have been no way prepared; nor do we know whether it is Leontine's choice that his daughter should go one road into futurity, while he himself pursues another. The matter is very soon brought about, and is not sufficiently probable; however, we find it so, and that Pulcheria has wrought the change, for which her proselyte returns thanks in grateful terms: the imperial princess vows strict friendship, and proposes a mutual participation of joys and griefs. Touching upon the master-string of her heart, Athenais, who, but a few lines since says, that conversion has eased her of the *lumber of passion*---a kind of methodistical

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thodistical figure---here gives a loose to grief, and vents bitter reproaches against the fallacy of man.

Theodosius coming in, his sister presents her fair convert, when lo ! it appears, that she is the identical unknown beauty who had inspired him with love, and for whose sake he meant to leave the world. This incident tells well in action ; his immediate proffer of marriage is violently sudden, yet no harsh violation of nature. Leontine's approbation of the honourable choice is suitable, and the author has furnished Athenais with a proper degree of diffident submission in her reply ; the new appointed Empress, Pulcheria, &c. being retired, Varanes, who comes to take his leave of Theodosius, is acquainted with the unexpected change in favour of that monarch's happiness ; the Persian prince, though deeply wounded in mind himself, congratulates his friend's joy, and laments that his own painful situation wont let him stay to share it.

This naturally damps Theodosius's satisfaction ; however, he requests Varanes to see his bride before he goes, which the latter seems willing to decline. There is something odd in the Emperor's behaviour, not to ask the cause of his friend's melancholly and sudden departure ; the plot has here intruded much upon friendship ; Athenais is brought on, and presented by her imperial lover to the Persian, whose astonishment and confusion may be much more easily imagined than expressed. To increase the swell and agitation of his heart, she treats him as the provocation he gave her merited, and leaves him to vent his passion with Theodosius. What passes between these royal personages is again very odd, for though the half-headed Emperor sees his friend

^{Theodosius,}
 eaten up with passion, and suffers himself to be catechized for taking the woman he likes, yet he never enquires into the reason of all this; indeed, when Varanes clears up the matter, by avowing his passion, he shews some generous sensibility, by offering to submit his claim to the lady's choice. This causes Varanes to whimper like a whipped school-boy; and Theodosius, piously leaving the issue to heaven, goes to prepare Athenais for an interview with his distressed rival. Arantes, by offering to comfort his master, inflames his rage more, and is charged with being the author of his misfortune; notwithstanding the prince is half mad, our author has put into his mouth a poetical description of the tranquility of rural obscurity; yet this we could have borne tolerably well, as the thought is pretty, and the lines flowing, had not jingle been introduced.

At the beginning of the fourth act, we meet Marcian lamenting his fallen state; he is soon joined by that other unentertaining superfluity, Pulcheria, who, as it would seem, has sneaked after him. The last time they parted she pronounced his banishment, yet now she so far forgets herself, as to trust him with a very signal instance of her imperial brother's folly; and then as strangely discovers, without any hint to stir recollection, that she has been talking with a proscribed traitor. This draws on three or four lines of fresh reproach, then she softens, taking a very dubious leave.

When Lucius concludes she is in love with the general, and tells him so, Marcian very justly replies, that they neither of them know any thing of her, and that it is out of the power of human nature
 to

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to scan her. We most heartily concur in the soldier's opinion, for, as the author has drawn her, she is equally unintelligible and insignificant : an unprincipled excrescence of a poetical brain.

The token of Theodosius's weakness, which she has put into Marcian's hand, he determines to make use of, for rousing the Emperor from his lethargic effeminacy. This the author has made him put in practice, but the scene is generally omitted, and we think blameably ; for though it wants much softening on Marcian's side, yet a subject forcing bold, honest truths, into a weak monarch's ear, is a very pleasing and instructive picture for a British stage ; though perhaps such a one, in a new piece, might not now be licenced ; possibly it is from a similar principle omitted by courtly managers. We remember the scene once done in Dublin, with very pleasing and proper effect.

The short scene between Theodosius and Athenais, preparatory to seeing Varanes, shews the Emperor to be a most condescending rival ; and the lady observes, with great good sense, that it is a severe and dangerous trial, to throw her in the way of one who had once inspired her with so tender a passion ; he notwithstanding, leaves her to the violent struggle of love and glory. No sooner is he gone off, than Varanes appears, a picture of despair ; she is struck with the settled melancholly that clouds him, yet resolves to withstand the softer feelings : her taunts are remarkably severe, particularly where she mentions hearing him in obedience to the Emperor's command. In short, she reduces the prince to such an exquisite degree of pain, that though some of his conduct merits contempt, we are obliged to pity him.

him. Where he mentions his death, and begs that compassion which he cannot obtain in life, the scene grows truly pathetic, and the audience must melt with Athenais ; who, shocked at the sound of an everlasting farewell from the idol of her heart, calls him back, and candidly, with warmth, expresses her love, yet leaves him with the idea, that their inclinations cannot be fulfilled. What the reason of this insuperable perplexity is, we dont see ; having forgiven the insult she received, and Theodosius being disposed to confirm her choice, what happens appears to be only the author's obstinate pursuit of a tragical catastrophe. What Varanes says after she is gone, appears to us very strained and bombastical : comparing himself to a person buried alive, is straining idea horridly : it is worthy of remark, that in this scene, Varanes swears by, or appeals to the gods, no less than six times ; indeed, through the whole piece, Marcian and he are bringing in the deities upon every occasion ; insomuch, that allowing the difference of plurality, it might be supposed they had been educated among the English foot-guards, where swearing is a capital accomplishment, and constant practice.

Athenais, ornamented with imperial robes for the nuptials, begins the fifth act, with her attendant Delia. She very justly complains of being hurried to the Temple at the midnight hour, but is told that the design is to keep her marriage as long as possible from the knowledge of Varanes, in compassion to his pains ; her confidante dismissed, she determines upon taking poison, and empties the deadly cup. Pulcheria, at entrance, takes notice of the Empress's distressful and pallid looks : doubting the

effect

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effect of what she has done in futurity, Athenais asks what punishment awaits suicide, which is a very natural question, as she has been so lately made a Christian, and heathen sects hold it a meritorious action to seek refuge in voluntary death, rather than labour under excess of pain or disgrace. Leontine coming to conduct his daughter to the Temple, observes and reproves her melancholly, charging her to think no more of Varanes, who has used her ill; the unforgiving rigidity of unfeeling age is here well contrasted to the relenting softness of a female heart, impressed with a tender regard; the unhappy bride suffers herself to be led like a tame victim, yet pathetically declares Varanes can never be erased or banished from her mind.

The Persian prince, wholly a prey to despair, appears next, in soliloquy. Our author has drawn together, and furnished him with various striking images, well adapted to the gloom of melancholly; but what in the name of nature and common sense, could make him run it into rhyme: we had some idea of relieving this speech from such shameful fetters, in the same manner we did that of the Fryar in Romeo and Juliet, but as the play wants alteration in many other respects, we have declined it.

Upon the entrance of Arantes, who has been sent by the prince to Athenais's apartment, he acquaints his master that she is gone to be married; this determines Varanes on speedily putting a period to his intolerable life, and he claims holding the sword against his breast, as an action of friendship, from Arantes; who proposes to attend his master in death, but is charged to survive, and bear his bleeding corse immediately to the Temple.

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Things so disposed, our broken-hearted hero puts his fatal resolution in practice, and breaths his last in a most miserable couplet, rather laughable than pathetic.

We are once again conducted to the Temple, where, after a nuptial benediction is given, Arantes enters with the body of his deceased lord ; and in two speeches, interestingly descriptive, relates the manner of his death. Athenais, overwhelmed with the circumstance, quits the living bridegroom for the dead lover ; embraces his body, declares, to the astonishment of her husband, father, &c. that tho' she consented to marriage, her heart was always with Varanes ; wherefore, she took a poisonous draught, which soon takes effect, and sends her after the dear object of her first inclination. Theodosius, struck with this unexpected incident, renews his former intention of laying down the reins of government, and gives the empire to Pulcheria and Marcian, who have made up matters very strangely ; thus the piece hurries to a conclusion.

The tragedy of THEODOSIUS is regular in its plot, and has many scenes of peculiar tenderness ; yet is sadly incumbered by those disagreeable non-essentials, Marcian and Pulcheria, who have almost as little business in that piece, as they would have in Julius Cæsar. The play might easily be altered so as to leave them entirely out, by which means the other characters would necessarily be enriched, and the main action more properly attended to : the versification is flowing, and many of the sentiments brilliant, yet bombast frequently soars to a disagreeable, unintelligible height ; the author has
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shewn warmth of genius, but coldness and inactivity of judgment.

Theodosius---sure there never was such an insipid morsel of royalty, is scarce a character in any shape; he has nothing to mark him but a kind of boyish, amorous weakness. After his first scene, he has not a line to utter that is worth an actor's speaking, or a spectator's hearing: it is hardly reasonable, though he gives name to the piece, to mention the performance of such an unseasoned incumbrance upon action; if we mistake not, Mr. SMITH made his first attempt in this unfavourable part, which he rendered in some measure bearable, and has continued to bear it up ever since till last season. Mr. DIGGES has been pushed on for it, but was much too manly in his person, and too declamatory in his expression; the lover, at least of this class, sits uneasy upon him. Mr. REDDISH! in the name of equity, if any such principle dwells within a theatre, why should such superior abilities be crammed into so disagreeable an undertaking? especially when that *capital* actor, Mr. CAUTHERLY, might much more properly drudge through it, than Hamlet, Romeo, and a dreadful &c. which with most cruel kindness are imposed upon him.

Marcian, the tragical blunderbuss, who seems to have no idea of any difference between freedom and rudeness of speech, utters several sentiments which, well expressed, cannot fail of applause, and Mr. SPARKS used to give us singular pleasure in those passages: Mr. CLARKE is by no means displeasing, but Mr. AICKIN, mounted on LEE's fiery, hard-mouthed PEGASUS, sits in a very ticklish, tottering situation. Mr. MOSSOP did it one season in Dub-

Theod. fuit.

lin, and thinking it unworthy his powers, acquired, through negligence, an ease which he wanted in more important characters ; so became, by accident, much the most agreeable performer we ever saw in this part.

Leontine is a character of worth ; he may be rendered estimable without any capital requisites ; his solicitude for Athenais's virtue, and contempt of aggrandisement upon unworthy terms, speak him equally a tender father and a good man ; he must interest an audience, especially where he calls his pupil to an explanation. Mr. RIDOUT personated this amiable philosopher with ability : Mr. GIBSON has had the misfortune to follow him in the part, but never can succeed to his merit ; having either no feeling at all, or such a disgustful utterance of it, as is worse than none : Mr. HULL should certainly do it at Covent Garden.

Aranthes has but two speeches of any regard, they indeed should be taken care of ; wherefore, we cannot sufficiently express our surprize to think any manager should so far mistake his place and judgment, as to suffer the marring of them by that distinguished mutilator of sense, language and character, Mr. DAVIS : on the other hand, we cannot reconcile giving this attendant at Drury Lane, to Mr. PALMER, who frequently stands in a first light ; it is making both head and tail of a man. Certainly, amongst the number of young mutes, who serve only to prop up the side wings, and bow to every bashaw of three tails, some one might be found to do such a part as this with tolerable decency.

Varanes, who was most the object of our author's attention, is an odd medley of love and pride ;

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now he will, then will not; profuse in professions, irresolute in practice; tender, impatient; in short, a romantic madman; yet, notwithstanding inconsistencies of a glaring nature, he is as a dramatic personage, highly interesting. We have undergone the torture of hearing him preached by Mr. SHERIDAN, whose stage-love was the most grating that ever wounded a tender ear; yet we cannot justly avoid allowing him a very characteristic despondance of features in the last scene of the fourth act, and considerable merit in the midnight soliloquy. Mr. ROSS is very bearable, but wants much of that fire necessary to keep pace with his author: when Mr. SMITH took leave of the Emperor, and formed an alliance with the Persian prince, he made a most lamentable mistake; and we wish, for old acquaintance sake, he may return to his original, disagreeable as it is, rather than shew himself to more conspicuous disadvantage.

Mr. BARRY must in imagination to those who are at all acquainted with his performance, fill up every idea of excellence in this character; his love was enchanting, his rage alarming, his grief melting; even now, though overtaken by time, and impaired in his constitution, he has not the shadow of a competitor. The rheumatic stiffness of his joints has been industriously trumpeted forth, and every mean art made use of to lower him in public opinion: yet true it is, that if he hobbled upon stilts, he would be better than any persons in his stile upon their best legs. A gentleman of acknowledged judgment lately made the following just and striking simile, that Mr. BARRY was like the time-worn ruins of Palmira and Balbec; which, even in a fallen

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state, shew more dignity and real beauty, than the compleat productions of modern architecture. We heartily lament that this gentleman's cast is so inconsistent with his years, and wish his prudence had laid up an independancy, that he might have retired ere envy and theatrical policy had sapped the foundation of his well-earned fame.

Pulcheria, as a character, we have already given our opinion of; what she says is full as insignificant as what she does; and Mrs. VINCENT, whom no length of years can make old, if she had never been trusted with any superior undertaking in tragedy, might here have been bearable enough: but what dull head, or hard heart, could have put the agreeable Mrs. W. BARRY, of Drury Lane, upon so irksome an undertaking-- Come forth Mrs. HOPKINS, and seize this Roman princess, more consonant to thy abilities, than the young and beauteous Zara, and as suitable to thy delicate figure.

Athenais is much the most estimable character in this piece; for, laying aside the weakness of her sex, and resisting the temptation of a darling object, she maintains that exalted virtue practically, which her father only admires and recommends in speculation; however, tho' we approve her general conduct, yet she manifests a strong taint of romantic ideas: her self-denial is carried to an extreme. As to the termination of her own life, we have already exculpated that, by remarking, that she had not been informed how abominable an action self-murder is deemed in the Christian system.

The part of Athenais, though well delivered from the author's pen, has none of those masterly strokes of action, which gave Mrs. CIBBER an opportunity
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Theodorus.

of displaying her exquisite abilities ; wherefore, we always thought that lady rather below herself in the fair Athenian, and allowed Mrs. BELLAMY to come nearer an equality in this, than any other character ; they both were singularly pleasing, but we must prefer Mrs. BARRY to either, as having equal force with more nature.

Miss MILLER has certainly given Mr. COLMAN some bitter provocation, that he pushes her on for this and several other characters equally unfit ; indeed, she did it for her benefit, which is a season when many performers, to indulge vanity, kindly treat their friends with the barbarous and dreadful, though not bloody murder of a principle character ; this is like asking acquaintances to dinner, and giving a thin breast of mutton instead of a good sirloin of beef, which is equally ready.

This play has no moral, there is no vice to merit punishment, and what virtue there is falls a sacrifice to ill conducted passions : we are apt to think its tendency prejudicial to young minds, as it furnishes very extravagant notions of love ; and therefore, though it always pleases in representation, cannot cordially recommend it.



The F O U N D L I N G.

A COMEDY, by Mr. MOORE.

IN the first scene we meet young Belmont rallying Colonel Raymond, for making love in a stile of gravity to his sister, of whose volatile and coquettish disposition he draws a very pleasant picture, and also, by way of contrast, ludicrously paints the Colonel to himself; after this, he enters upon an account of women, which we think extremely injurious, to the sensible part of the sex at least, and shews his notions to be unnatural; to suppose that good understanding will make any female more ready to encourage a fool, is strange doctrine; pride may work such an effect, but sound sense cannot: freedom, among friends, is the life of social enjoyment, but, we think young Belmont places the Colonel in too severe and ridiculous a light; it seems as if the author had sacrificed every other consideration to that of enriching his favourite character. When Fidelia comes to be mentioned, Belmont goes on in the same rhapsodical stile concerning her, that he has made use of concerning his sister, respecting the uncertainty of her birth; Belmont speaks as a man of gallantry with very vague, undetermined principles; upon the Colonel's enquiry, whether Rosetta knows any thing of Fidelia's real story, Belmont declares she does not, but believes her to be the sister of a fellow collegian of his, and in
that

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that light recommends her as a wife to him; being asked his father's disposition towards the young lady, he says, there is nothing wanting of recommendation to the old gentleman but some certainty of a fortune; here he takes a most reprehensible method of removing a kind of dilemma he is in, and meanly says, as he has brought her into the family by one misrepresentation, he'll remove her by another; and what is that? forsooth, by scandalizing her virtue. Belmont favours action in this scene, but he is no more nor less than a despicable reptile, furnished with more words than meaning, more humour than sense.

In the succeeding conversation between Rosetta and Fidelia, we find that the former rattles away in the same stile and sentiment, concerning men, and the treatment of them in love affairs, that her brother, in the preceeding scene, used respecting her; Fidelia charges her with being in love with Colonel Raymond, though she makes him wear such painful chains. The gay coquette sports with this circumstance a little, yet acknowledges he is not indifferent, and assigns a very generous motive for keeping him off at present; having held his solicitations at a distance, while his circumstances wore an unfavourable aspect, she justly thinks surrendering, when fortune smiles upon her lover, would seem mercenary.

By what she drops, we perceive, that Sir Charles, the Colonel's father, was attainted, as having joined the rebellion, but lately pardoned by royal clemency; Rosetta cautions Fidelia against the wildness of her brother, which draws from the latter a declaration, that let the danger be what it may,
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he is the man of her choice; here Rosetta ^{Foundling.} archly advises her friend to marry Sir Charles, who, it appears, has shewn a particular attachment for her; this, however, Fidelia thinks proceeds merely from his humanity, and is laughed at by the coquette for her grave ideas.

Just as she is uttering these words, "What a sweet mama shall I have when I marry the Colonel," young Belmont and that gentleman enter; the former repeats his sister's words, which the Colonel calls lucky ones. She aims at giving them a different turn; but Fidelia counteracts the design, and confirms them, by repeating what she has said concerning Sir Charles; and having her for a mama, &c. thus the grave young lady indulges her mirth, while her gay companion is considerably puzzled how to turn the tables. Belmont keeps up the fret, and even the Colonel seems to enjoy it; at length, a servant brings a letter which relieves her; it appears to come from one Mr. Faddle, whom she speaks of with rapture; the Colonel seems much struck, and shewing his uneasiness, gives her an opportunity of triumphing in turn, which she does by reading the coxcomb's frothy epistle, and asking her lover's opinion of it.

The first act concludes with a soliloquy of very boyish import, and the couplet is remarkably feeble; Sir Roger Belmont and Sir Charles Raymond begin the second act; complaints are uttered against his son's conduct by the former, which the latter endeavours to mitigate; it appears, that Sir Roger's uneasiness arises from being at the expence of keeping Fidelia, without knowing whether she has any fortune to repay, in case of marriage with his
son;

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son; Sir Charles hints that a serious connection is not much to be dreaded, and both the old gentlemen appear concerned for the preservation of Fidelia's honour, whose mysterious situation is so unaccountable: to clear up the doubts that naturally arise, Sir Charles advises his friend to bring young Belmont, as soon as possible, to an explanation of whom the young lady really is; Sir Roger seeing his son approach, resolves to attack him on this point.

The young gentleman enters, repeating some rapturous lines; the father, upon his mentioning that times are hard, observes, that he ought, as her Guardian, to improve Fidelia's money, and that a good round sum may be thrown into the stocks to advantage; this throws the young gentleman into confusion, and occasions a very laughable scene of equivocation; after bearing a great deal, the old man seems to conceive matters in the right light, and gives, at his going off, an intimation which startles young Belmont; he thinks his sister concerned in the affair, and resolves, by the aid of Faddle, to out-plot her; she joins him, and after playing agreeably through some speeches upon patience, the definition of a coquette, and that of a rake occur, which are both pleasantly given; however, we think, as a brother, young Belmont explains himself too far.

Seeing the Colonel, he goes off, and leaves him to a tete-a-tete with the young lady; this serious son of Mars addressing his mistress in the solemn way, she asks him if he is a rake; and demanding how he would behave to her if really such a character, the Colonel collects unusual spirit; kisses her hand,

and breaths a glow of rapture, which she receives ^{Foundling.} ironically, and thereby draws him again into the serious mood, nay even works him into a degree of warm resentment, which also she treats lightly.

Just as the Colonel is fooled to the top of his bent, Faddle appears, and immediately feels some effect of the Colonel's choler, while the frightened Fop is in consternation at the rough treatment he has met, young Belmont and Fidelia join the company; this gives him a respite, and by degrees he is led on to a laughable account of himself and his companions; however, the author has certainly given him too much of this whip fillabub stuff. A servant whispering Rosetta that dinner is ready, she asks the gentlemen to partake, but Belmont having engaged Faddle to dine at a tavern, they remain while the other characters go off; when by themselves, Belmont gives Faddle a purse, by way of retaining fee, to assist him in getting Fidelia out of his father's house, as she is there too secure from his licentious designs; he owns himself to be only a fictitious guardian, and partly opens the manner in which he got possession of her; Faddle, who seems, as his employer observes, fit for any rascality, immediately suggests to himself a method of throwing the family into such confusion as may answer the purpose; pregnant with this hopeful design, they hasten off to dinner and conclude the second act.

At the beginning of the third, Rosetta and Fidelia present themselves, conversing upon the same subject that employed their first scene; the former insists that cruelty, or seeming cruelty to gallants, is the best treatment of them; Fidelia differing from

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this opinion, a pretty and pertinent song is introduced; a servant brings a letter, the contents of which affect Rosetta so strongly, that she desires him to go for her brother and Faddle to the tavern where they dined. Fidelia requests to be a partaker of her friend's concern, which, after some hesitation is granted, by shewing the letter.

Upon perusing it, and finding herself not only represented as an imposter but a prostitute, Fidelia's feelings rise to a tender pitch, and she confesses herself not what the scroll represents, nor what she has been thought. Rosetta, though disagreeable doubts arise, treats her with cordial gentility; in consequence of the message Faddle comes in, and is taxed with his knowledge of the subject, or the writer of that letter; his evasions are whimsical; at length, half owning the matter, and laying some imputation on Fidelia, her resentment so far gets the better of her delicacy, that she strikes him; Rosetta promises every kind of protection, if he can make any discovery in which the honour of her family is concerned; or wishes him poverty and contempt if he has himself any part in trumping up so illiberal and base an accusation.

With the true effrontery of a villain, he treats the matter lightly, and hurries off, leaving it totally unexplained; Rosetta, agitated with doubt, presses Fidelia to open the affair as much as in her power; which however she declines, through delicacy of a promise made to young Belmont that she does not chuse to break. Coming in at this critical point of conversation, his sister opens the matter, giving him the letter; which he represents as the offspring of scandal, and threatens to revenge the matter on

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Faddle,

Faddle; as he makes this an excuse for getting off, Fidelia stops him, and mentions that she has owned herself a counterfeit, which he takes umbrage at; however, she begs of him to clear up her character from the vile and groundless imputation of prostitution; this he avoids in a very churlish and ungentlemanlike manner.

After his abrupt exit, Rosetta leaves her abused friend with a declaration, that she expects to have her doubts cleared, before she can afford continuance of that cordial esteem she has hitherto manifested; Fidelia, in a short soliloquy, laments her perplexed situation, and goes off to make way for her treacherous gallant, who meditates on his own rascality, and views it in the proper light, yet seems to think himself possessed of honour above lying, and honesty above deceit; at the same time, that he does not shew a gleam of contrition, but even resolves to pursue his scandalous purpose.

In a short conversation with his vicious agent, that rhapsodical fool hints, by way of getting a fresh bribe, qualms of conscience; after some threats, young Belmont promises another purse, if he will bring him word what passes between Sir Charles Raymond and Fidelia, who are gone into an adjoining chamber; this Faddle cheerfully undertakes, and his employer goes to the King's arms to wait for his intelligence.

The old Baronet and young lady are next discovered, in conference upon the letter which has occasioned so much uneasiness; Sir Charles blames Fidelia for too much reserve with Rosetta; she apologizes for it by owning her regard for young Belmont, which seals her lips: Faddle, true to his trust,

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appears listening, and when the old gentleman humanely proposes taking Fidelia under his protection, if Rosetta's suspicions should make the Belmont family uneasy to her; he catches the idea of her being, as he phrases it, a bit for Sir Charles, and posts away to the tavern with what he thinks a rare bit of news. Fidelia's tears draw a consolatory remark from the Baronet, that he hopes something may be soon done for her relief; and she ends the act with a pretty thought relative to patience, if it had not been jingled into rhyme.

The Colonel and Rosetta commence the fourth act, he renewing his addresses, and she continuing her coquettish raillery: the Colonel, in compliance with his mistress's desire, gives the following pretty and just description of matrimony. "To fools, madam, it is the jewel of Æsop's cock; to the wise a diamond of price in a skilful hand to enrich life; it is happiness or misery, as minds are differently disposed. The necessary requisites are love, good sense, and good breeding; the first to unite, the second to advise, and the third to comply; if you add to these neatness and a competency, beauty will always please, and family cares become agreeable amusements."

Rosetta animadverts pleasantly upon this picture of the married life, and still dallies with the amorous Colonel; at last, she changes the discourse to Fidelia, of whom she speaks in a friendly manner; and tells her gallant, that if he hopes to make love successfully, it must be by endeavouring to clear up the perplexity of her fair friend, then proposes to visit her with him.

Young

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Young Belmont and Faddle present themselves, conversing upon the supposed design of Sir Charles, in offering Fidelia apartments, which the latter declares to be with a vicious intention. Seeing the old baronet approach, young Belmont retires, and leaves his worthy assistant to banter him ; for which purpose he addresses Sir Charles with all the familiarity of an unblushing coxcomb, offers his service, but sneeringly observes, that old poachers hunt sure ; with other impertinent remarks, which the baronet seems not to understand, till he draws Faddle into a repetition of his own words, concerning the apartments, and Fidelia's acknowledgment for the proposed favour. Roused by his insolent ribaldry and scandalous insinuation, Sir Charles shuts the door ; this alarms the conscious scoundrel, who, after two or three hearty shakes by the collar, first confesses that he did listen, and next acknowledges his having forged, with young Belmont's connivance, the anonymous letter which has caused so much pain and confusion. Having thus made the discovery he wanted, Sir Charles dismisses the parasite, with a most excellent' lecture ; so descriptive of such reptiles, and so pregnant with instructive truth, that we beg leave to offer it our readers.

“ Thy life is a disgrace to humanity ; a foolish prodigality makes thee needy ; need makes thee vicious, and both make thee contemptible ; thy wit is prostituted to slander and buffoonery ; and thy judgment, if thou hast any, to meanness and villainy. Thy betters, who laugh with thee, laugh at thee ; and who are they ? the fools of quality at court, and those who ape them in the city ; the varieties of thy life, are pitiful rewards and painful abuses ; for the

Foundling.

the same trick that gets thee a guinea to-day, shall get thee beaten out of doors to-morrow ; those who care for thee are enemies to themselves, and when they know it will be enemies to thee ; in thy distresses they'll desert thee, and leave thee at last to sink in thy poverty, unregarded and unpitied ; if thou canst be wise, think of me, and be honest."

Faddle, thus severely catechised, feels himself in a fresh dilemma, upon the approach of young Belmont ; however, having cleared himself of one scrape by telling of truth, he determines to escape another, by means of lying heartily. To this end he tells young Belmont, that Sir Charles has made him a confidante, but the assertion is deemed apocryphal. Seeing Sir Charles returning he decamps, prudently resolving never to set his foot in the house again.

The baronet comes on with a servant, who has delivered him a letter, purporting, that if the interest of his family be dear to him, it is essentially necessary that he should attend the bearer of the letter ; this extraordinary summons startles him, but however important, he says there is another concern that must precede it. Here young Belmont asking what news, Sir Charles attacks him in an emphatic strain of spirited reproach, for his design upon Fidelia, which he only answers by recrimination ; and the baronet's noble, disinterested sentiments, place Belmont's equivocation and false fire in a contemptible light ; even his challenge is foiled with disgrace, by the old gentleman's unanswerable method of treating it. Being told of Faddle's discovery, he takes shame to himself with a tolerable grace, and appears ready to make any reparation. Sir Charles desires
him

him to undeceive his sister, and then goes to the ^{Foundling.} bearer of the letter. When alone, Belmont takes a just view of his proceedings, which he finds as weak as they have been despicable; and feels perplexity rise so fast, that he resolves to fly upon the wings of penitence to injured Fidelia, and seek from her advice that peace of mind he cannot strike out for himself.

At the beginning of the fifth act, Sir Roger Belmont enters, considerably fluttered with a letter he has received; which letter, from a pretended guardian of Fidelia's, threatening a law-suit for stealing her, he shews to Sir Charles in great anxiety, and determines that she shall be packed off immediately; but this hasty resolution his friend dissuades him from, and they retire to consult upon the matter.

Young Belmont, in the next scene, receives some very just and keen reproaches from Fidelia, for the base treatment she has received from him; he pleads hard to obtain forgiveness, yet, though a violence to her love, which she candidly acknowledges, she holds him at a distance. Thus pressed in his feelings, he offers marriage, but this also, on a generous principle, she declines. Rosetta here joins them, full of the intelligence that Fidelia has been stolen by her brother, and that her guardian is at hand to demand satisfaction. This, young Belmont receives as a pleasing piece of information; he is going to explain the story of Fidelia, when Sir Roger, Sir Charles, the Colonel, and Villiard enter, the latter of whom is informed, that if he claims the lady, and makes good his claim, she shall be restored without any hesitation.

He asserts her to be his ward, and that she was stolen by violence from him by Belmont. His
proofs

Foundling.

proofs being demanded, he evades the point, and says, they shall be produced in a court of law. Fidelia is then questioned, who, after his accusations have been heard, draws a pathetic picture of Villiard's brutal attempt, which Mr. Belmont, by mere accident, saved her from.

The circumstance of having relieved distressed innocence, gives Sir Roger a generous feeling of joy for his son's humane, gallant interposition. Villiard, finding no probability of success by staying, goes off, with warm threats. Rosetta asking who the anonymous scroll, written by Faddle, came from, her brother frankly owns he had a hand in it; and, by way of reparation, offers to take the young lady for life: here Sir Roger's love of money cuts off his consent. This draws a most generous proposal from Colonel Raymond, which is to take Rosetta without a fortune, so her's may be bestowed on Fidelia. While matters remain dubious, and a good deal of delicacy is manifested on all sides, Sir Charles steps in, and declares, that he will make Fidelia equal to Sir Roger's utmost wish, in point of property; and, in a few lines after, with a melting flow of paternal tenderness, declares her to be his daughter. The general astonishment arising from this unexpected discovery, he removes by the following explanation: That at the time of his banishment, he left this daughter, an infant, to the care of a woman, who, to secure some jewels, made the child believe she was a Foundling, and changed her name of Harriet to Fidelia, that at twelve years old she sold her to Villiard; that being seized with sudden illness, and having heard of Sir Charles's return, she had sent for him, and from apprehensions of death,

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confessed the whole ; thereby proving the identity of a child, which, during his exile, she sent him word was dead. Matters brought to this agreeable crisis, all parties are made happy ; the two young couple, by interchange of hands, and the old baronets, by seeing their children united according to mutual inclinations.

Young Belmont concludes the play with a very apt deduction from his own misconduct, and a sensible remark---would it had not been made in rhyme--that libertinism preys upon that beautiful, weak part of the creation, which it is man's natural province to defend.

The piece now considered, has proved a very agreeable subject for criticism, having much to praise, and little to censure ; for however persons who feel, and shrink at, the touch of our rod, may think we tend to severity, it is an undoubted fact, that we are infinitely better pleased to point out merit than deficiencies, in both writing and performance.

It has been said that this play was evidently borrowed from the CONSCIOUS LOVERS, but we can perceive no striking similitude to authorise that opinion ; the discovery of a daughter in each, is not sufficient to support the remark ; there is indeed some likeness between Fidelia and Indiana, but all the other characters differ essentially.

In the FOUNDLING, critical unities are well preserved, and the plot lays proper hold of suspense and attention ; there are no make-shift scenes, nor any that are tedious ; several excellent.

Sir Roger Belmont has nothing peculiar to mark him, and may be called a good kind of an old fellow ; only a little tainted with the love of money.

If

Foundling.

If the author had done half as much in writing the part, as Mr. YATES did in acting it, Sir Roger would have been as conspicuous as any man in the piece. Mr. LOVE, to those who have not seen the forementioned gentleman, may pass very well.

Sir Charles Raymond is an object of great esteem; his tender concern for Fidelia, before he knows any more of her than that she is young, beautiful and in dangerous hands, recommends him much; the manner of chastising both Faddle and Belmont, on her account, does equal honour to his justice, his humanity, his spirit, and his good sense. Tho' we never admired Mr. BARRY in prose dialogue, yet it would be very injurious not to allow, that where the part materially called upon him, he powerfully answered. In the fourth act, he supported the character with emphatic dignity; in the last, with melting tenderness; we dont recollect any body who could have been better. Mr. BERRY was heavy, ungraceful, and out of character: Mr. BANNISTER has no expression of soft feelings, but speaks the four first acts very well, and figures the part agreeably. Mr. POWELL had requisites to render Sir Charles Raymond very pleasing; and Mr. REDDISH would do him more justice than any other part in the play.

Young Belmont is very censurable as a man; he does the meanest things, even under self-conviction, with no other plea of excuse than the pitiful one, that his appetites drive him on; had he rushed upon vice, without giving himself time to think, he would have been more bearable; a speculative libertine is the most dangerous, and most incurable. His rescuing Fidelia must be considered as an action

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of spirit, and yet by his behaviour afterwards, it is little more than a lion saving a lamb from the wolf, that he may devour it himself. As a character for action, the author most undoubtedly meant him capital; yet, excepting the first scene, and that with his father, which we allow truly pleasant; and that with Sir Charles, where he is little better than a foil to the baronet, he has nothing to say worth notice; and then he is placed in such a disgraceful light, that we cannot think him very desirable for an actor of merit; however, Mr. GARRICK's peculiar qualifications, and happy use of them, added amazing spirit to the piece; giving young Belmont much more consequence than can well be imagined.

Mr. LEE is very pleasing and characteristic in this part, though rendered worse within some late years by studied improvements, than he was when he took less pains. Mr. Ross, and this gentleman, are a striking contrast; the former, by negligence, impoverishes good natural talents, and the latter, by a laborious, theatrical mechanism, impairs very agreeable qualifications. Mr. REDDISH appears to very great disadvantage in this part, he has nothing of the requisite volubility; Mr. KING should certainly do it, if public satisfaction is in any shape worthy managerial consideration; a point we have much reason to doubt of late.

Colonel Raymond is a butt of ridicule, a mere cypher in action; Mr. HAVARD did him originally, as well as ever he has been done since, and there is nothing in him beyond the power of Mr. PACKER.

Faddle is a thorough-paced reptile, ready to transact any mean business for a bribe; and, under the appearance of rhapsodical foppery, a designing knave,

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knave. Several passages of this part were originally repulsed, and we think with great justice, for a great deal of what he says in his first scene is frothy, superfluous and low; we think his getting off without any other chastisement than what Sir Charles gives him, is rather sacrificing poetical justice.

Mr. MACKLIN, who never had, in voice, figure, or features, much capability for the fop cast, yet struck out some things in Faddle, which we have not seen any body equal; particularly marking the obsequious knave all through. After allowing thus much, we are willing to pronounce Mr. DODD better than any other performer we remember.

Rosetta is a most agreeable coquette, sensible, and full of vivacity; tinctured with harmless inconstancy and pardonable pride; her notions are consonant to gay life, florid youth, and a flighty imagination; if she does not manifest absolute wit, she yet may be allowed a brilliance of idea, and sprightliness of expression. The part was undoubtedly conceived for Mrs. WOFFINGTON, and she did it particular justice; nor should we wonder, since the elegance, the notions of love, and the vanity of admiration from gallants, which are united in Rosetta, were natural to that lady; so that here she had the advantage of looking, walking, and speaking her own character. Notwithstanding our general veneration for Mrs. PRITCHARD, we cannot place her upon a level with the *je ne se quoy* of Mrs. WOFFINGTON, in this part. Miss POPE falls inconceivably below both. Where, oh drowsy or partial managers! is Mrs. ABINGTON, who has so much of the pleasing and elegant original about her,

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Fidelia's circumstances place her in a very particular degree of estimation; her principles are unexceptionable, and her conduct prudent; we pity her critical situation, and rejoice at the discovery which establishes her happiness. That delicate softness and pathos which distinguish this character, sit with much ease upon Mrs. CIBBER; at present, Mrs. BADDELEY supports it with very agreeable capability, and is by far the most adequate performer in the piece.

If this play must be compared with the CONSCIOUS LOVERS, we readily admit it to the second place; but take it in a separate view, and it deserves considerable praise. It speaks so feelingly to our passions, so chastely to our ideas, and so instructively to our sense, that we wish it often well performed on the stage, and a cordial reception in the closet.



THE

The E A R L of E S S E X.

A TRAGEDY, by Mr. JONES.

SO interesting has the story of Essex been considered, at least so advantageous a light has BANKS, who first wrote upon the subject, placed it in, that there have been no less than three plays struck out upon his plan; we have chosen that by Mr. JONES, as being in possession of the stage, and, in many respects, the best composition; though produced by a man whose whole dependance was on natural genius, of which he gave several strong proofs, and might have furnished more, had his conduct any way coincided with his talents; but like many other unhappy sons of the muse, his life was a disgrace to his writings, and though his capacity gained him many friends, the turbulence and ingratitude of his temper, prevented him from ever keeping one; but his work being more properly the object of our concern, we'll proceed to that, without further comment on its imprudent author.

Burleigh, the leading and very able minister of Eliza's reign, begins this piece with acquainting Raleigh that a bill to clip the wings of Essex's ambition has passed; he asks for corroborating proofs, which Sir Walter says are arrived; such as his making a private treaty with Tyrone, and the Scots King, calculated to ruin Burleigh in his Mistress's opinion.

Wary

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Wary Cecil desires that this pleasing piece of intelligence may be kept, like a battery concealed, to play upon the enemy by surprise; a messenger announcing the approach of Lady Nottingham, Burleigh considers what her business may be, as knowing her to have a partial regard for Essex; he prepares against any artifice she may use in that peer's favour, and dispatches Raleigh to watch the motions of Southampton and his friends, observing, that as a leader of faction, he must be taken care of. After some compliments from Nottingham, on his great abilities as a statesman, Cecil is acquainted by her that she has renounced Essex; she acknowledges having heretofore joined with him in his designs against the minister, but now determines to counteract those designs, which a blind passion for Essex made her promote; as her resentment arises from a slight thrown on her charms, Burleigh with great address improves her indignation, by mentioning the preference given to Rutland, even so far as their being united by a secret marriage before the Earl's setting off for Ireland.

This intelligence, like oil on flames, throws the Countess's temper into a blaze, and she execrates them in terms which we think too gross for her rank, though moved by jealousy. Upon Burleigh's proposing to work him out of royal favour, the only bar to his ruin, she gladly accepts the office of embittering his royal mistress against him, and goes off fully determined to try every method for effecting, not only his fall but death. Here Raleigh enters, and speaks of Southampton's approach.

That

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That Earl, in the full glow of friendly resentment, accuses Burleigh of putting in practice iniquitous measures, for the destruction of a worthy man and a good subject; the politician stands his warm reproaches with very prudent coolness, and asserts his own good intentions with confidence; throwing out an insinuation that too violent an attachment to Essex's cause may involve the hardy friend in his fall. This oblique threat Southampton treats with contempt, and mentions how ineffectually malice must labour to tear the wreaths of honour from Essex's brow; this brings the conference to an end, and Cecil goes off observing, that the queen shall judge of their debate; Southampton, after a warm effusion of friendship, in soliloquy, follows him to the royal presence.

Queen Elizabeth, seated on her throne, expresses displeasure at the bill of impeachment passed against Essex, without her privity or consent; upon this point she speaks warmly to Cecil, charging him with it; this he evades, but confesses a concurrence of opinion with parliament. While her Majesty is on the fret, Southampton enters, to whom she shews what she calls the base portrait of Essex; this gives him a fair opening for the defence of his friend, which he undertakes, by painting in nervous terms his innocence and loyalty. After a general reproof concerning the bill, the Queen dismisses all but Burleigh, to whom she gives an order for suppressing it: he begs the Queen to consider how unpopular such a step would be, and mentions proofs; however, she will hear nothing that way, and with an amiable

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degree of generous justice, declares accusation must cease, till he can make a personal defence. After Burleigh goes off, Elizabeth expresses her good opinion of Essex, though she knows his weakness: a hint is dropped of the place he has in her heart; she seems to view Burleigh in the right light, and concludes the first act, with determining to shield Essex against his fraudulent machinations.

Cecil, at the beginning of the second act, confesses to Raleigh, that the unexpected return of Essex rather confuses him; however, he sends for Nottingham, and determines to alarm the Queen as much as possible; finding affairs brought to this critical situation, that Essex or he must be sacrificed. The queen upon her entrance, expresses much surprise, that her favourite should return from his command in Ireland without leave; finding her temper warmed, and therefore in some measure fitted to receive an unfavourable impression of Essex, Burleigh mentions the secret treaty with Tyrone and the Scots King, tending, through the assistance of Essex and his friends, to attack even her native Isle; at first, she doubts this strange assertion, but upon considering so great a breach of duty in her general, as to leave his command without any authority but his own will; she collects all the dignity of station, and orders the culprit into her presence.

After an introductory address of Southampton's, the Earl of Essex appears, and, with a becoming degree of humiliation, addresses his sovereign, and apologizes for his conduct, by alledging, that he thought it proper, in person, to oppose scandal and the undermining efforts of envy; the Queen
does

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does not seem to consider this exculpation as he could wish, and justly observes, that the glow of language is, in his case, but of little use; that having appealed from her to the laws, he must abide by the laws.

After Elizabeth and her courtiers are retired, Essex ruminates, in soliloquy, upon the ill return his martial dangers and fatigues meets; he determines to stand the shock of adversity with resolution, seeming to think his ruin inevitable. Southampton returns, and tells his friend, that the Queen's displeasure, cherished by Lord Burleigh, increases; the fickleness of courts Essex seems to despise, and desires, as a more material concern than his political affairs, to be led where he may see his mourning lady; this he is warned against, as a dangerous step, it being necessary that their marriage at this particular juncture, should be concealed. Burleigh, by the Queen's command, demands Essex's staff of office; this inflames him to utter harsh terms against his undermining foe, and he declares, that having from her own hand received it, to her alone he will resign it. Southampton goes once again upon the business of intercession to soften the Queen, and leaves his friend still further to consider the instability of human greatness; this soliloquy has considerable merit, the imagery is agreeable and striking, without any strain of conception.

Rutland, with all the joy and tenderness of an affectionate wife, here flies into her husband's arms, who, for a moment, forgets his fallen state; and, when he recollects it, resolves to fly from courtly ingratitude to the sweets of retirement, with his be-

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loved object. Rutland observing the danger they stand in of a discovery, being in one of the Queen's apartments, Essex leads her off, with the pleasing idea of calm content, when separated from the house of greatness, where honesty and plain dealing are forbidden shelter.

At the beginning of the third act, Nottingham meets Burleigh, and enquires what occurred, after the Earl's audience of the Queen: this Burleigh relates, signifying, that her majesty was highly displeased at his refusal to return the staff of office, in compliance with her positive mandate; that her passion went so far as to threaten him with death; then softened into a recollection of his many shining qualities, and turned reproach on Cecil, for driving him, as she supposed, to such extremes; however, that after many changes for and against, she had ordered Essex to the Tower; but, in conclusion, commanded him to be brought into her presence. A message coming to Nottingham from the Queen, desiring her attendance in the royal closet, Burleigh suggests, that it is to consult her concerning Essex, and urges her to make the most of so favourable an opportunity, of stirring majesty to more essential resentment.

The Queen, discovered in soliloquy, seems deeply concerned for Essex's weakness of temper; which, with the artifice of his foes, places him in such a perilous, and pitiable situation; her pride appears hurt at his resistance, but love softens that pride into compassion. Here Nottingham, pregnant with all the fatal malevolence of jealousy, approaches Elizabeth, who tells her of Essex's contemptuous behaviour; at which, to cover her purpose the better, she seems surprized; but, as the conference proceeds,

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proceeds, stirs up the flame against him so far, that the Queen perceives a design of urging severity, which she checks, and desires Nottingham to send Rutland; then ruminates on the painful state of solitary grandeur, which, wanting the free, comfortable communication of social equality, is forced to bear its griefs and anxieties alone.

When Rutland appears, Elizabeth asks her opinion and counsel, respecting Essex: the Countess asserts, that his faults are created by envy, that they have no real existence; and speaks of Essex in such terms, that the Queen, with eagle-eyed jealousy, which however she conceals for some time, perceives her partial regard for the Earl: at length, Rutland's zeal goes so far, that her royal mistress dismisses her the presence.

Essex, conducted by Burleigh and others, presents himself, while the Queen is agitated: she demands why he refused to yield his staff; to this he replies, that it was his wish to lay his honours at the feet of her who had conferred them: on being charged with a self-sufficiency of speech, he pays himself some compliments, which no degree of provocation would draw from a man of real sense. At the charge of making a shameful compromise with rebels, Essex seems to think his life levelled at; however, as an exculpation, he asserts having been invested with discretionary power, and observes, that the circumstance of affairs obliged him to use that power as he had done. This defence he makes in terms that we think highly provocative, and therefore applaud the Queen's resentment, till she degrades her rank and sex, by striking him. This, we naturally suppose, rouses his impetuous temper still more; however,
his

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his fury vents itself only against the court tools, whom he violently threatens. After the Queen's departure, he gives an enlarged scope to rage; and, notwithstanding Southampton's palliative advice, vehemently, at all hazards, determines upon revenge.

At the beginning of the fourth act, we find, by Elizabeth's enquiry and Nottingham's answer, that Essex has been guilty of some outrage against the peace and dignity of government; that force has obliged him to an escape, and that he is fled to a place near the Thames, where resistance on his part is resolved. This behaviour, so unpardonable in its nature, wounds the Queen's regard for him deeply, and she expresses her concern pathetically, but recollecting her station, calls up becoming spirit.

Burleigh acquaints the Queen that Essex, Southampton, and all their factious adherents are secured; that their design, could they have gained over the citizens to assist them, was no less than attacking her royal person; that all the characters of lesser note concerned in this traiterous attempt have been secured, but that the two Earls, and others of distinguished rank, are left to her majesty's disposal: this account draws from Elizabeth some pertinent and affecting remarks on the ingratitude of subjects, ready to rise against a monarch, who has always studied their advantage, collectively and individually.

She orders Essex to a private audience, and when he appears, addresses herself to him in very stinging terms, which he receives with all the anguish of remorse and self-conviction; with this she seems
touched,

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touched, and coolly expostulates with him on the ungrateful return he has made her bounty, so peculiarly manifested to him; then observes with cordial concern, that she fears the public voice will force him to the peril of his life; but to palliate the pain of his suspense declares, that she, as an individual, is willing to forgive his errors freely and fully. The apology he makes for his conduct is plausible, but no way conclusive; however it touches Elizabeth's heart, already so prejudiced in his favour, and she condoles with him most humanely: at length, being wrought up to a particular pitch of tenderness, she gives him a ring, with her royal promise, that if public justice should sentence his life, upon returning that token of her favour, he may be sure of finding clemency.

Thus secured from public and private foes, Essex retires, with expressions of fervent gratitude; after she delivers him to custody, a foreboding sits heavy on her heart, but she determines to stand between him and danger, however popular clamour may censure her protection.

Rutland, naturally afflicted, and urged on by her husband's situation, not knowing the degree of favour in which he stands, notwithstanding his misconduct, pleads to the Queen for his life and unhappily lets fall that he is her husband. This unexpected intelligence fixes a dagger in Elizabeth's heart; she orders the Countess, whose grief borders on distraction, to be taken from her presence, and after that order is fulfilled, concludes the fourth act, with painting in strong, and expressive colours, the melancholly state of her own mind;

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we look upon her at this period as an object of great pity, agitated between public duty, private affection, and confirmed jealousy.

Raleigh, with the lieutenant of the tower, begin the fifth act, and we are informed, that the two Earls, after a very candid trial by the peers, have been condemned; Nottingham enters, and demands admittance to Essex, which is granted; this revengeful lady comes with design to effect a consummation of vengeance, therefore wears the semblance of friendship, and pretends that the Queen had sent her to know if the Earl has no plea to avert his sentence.

Essex, not suspecting any sinister design, after some thankful compliments for the lady's humane interposition, gives her the important pledge; and with it a generous sollicitation for his friends life, without any mention of his own: possessed of this mark of royal regard, the Countess hurries off, exulting in the prospect of accomplishing her vindictive purpose; the Queen impatient for Nottingham's return, appears next; upon seeing her messenger, she asks what Essex has said, Nottingham, with singular art, works her up gradually, and seems to lament the Earl's fullen, unrelenting obstinacy; and says that even with death in view, he disdained making any concession to injured majesty. The Queen, at length, enquires particularly if he made any mention of a ring, which is denied; this circumstance is so striking, that Nottingham seldom fails of getting very rough language from one or more of an audience.

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After every aggravation against the man she wishes to save, Elizabeth gratifies Nottingham with an order that he may be led to the block; nay, her resentment is wrought up to such a pitch, that she even determines upon going to the Tower, that his fate may be imbittered by her presence.

Essex and Southampton, habited for the scaffold, next appear; the former, giving his friend hopes of life, the latter, with philosophic resolution, casting aside such flattering ideas. Some of the lines he speaks, we think worthy quotation.

Life! what is life? a shadow,
Its date is but th' immediate breath we draw,
Nor have we surety for a second gale;
Ten thousand accidents in ambush lie,
For th' embodied dream——
A frail and fickle tenement it is,
Which like the brittle glass that measures time,
Is often broke ere half its sands are run.

The whole of this scene shews warm friendship in one, noble resolution in the other. When the Lieutenant of the Tower comes on to signify that a warrant is arrived for both Earls to suffer, Essex emphatically laments the fate of his friend, and Southampton meets it with a determined, vigorous resolution; but when unexpectedly a pardon comes to the last mentioned nobleman, he melts into softness at the fate of his friend Essex, and parts from him in terms of noble, unshakeable friendship.

After this separation, Rutland comes to give her husband yet a severer trial of affliction; she clings about his heart, and melts him almost to a disgraceful degree of tenderness: at last, after many

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expressions of mutual endearment, the Lieutenant signifies, that time calls so pressingly, he must require the Earl's departure ; this throws both Essex and Rutland into an excess of tenderness, which occasions very strong feelings amongst an audience. At length they are separated, he goes to his fate, and she is left distractedly to lament it.

Here the Queen enters, we think much too soon ; for, according to her forbiddance of the execution immediately, it is improbable, nay impossible, the place considered, that his head could be taken off before her mercy is known ; however, so the plot takes its course, and Rutland, being disappointed of a hope she had conceived from the Queen's clemency, falls into a state of absolute madness, in which Elizabeth humanely offers to comfort her. Burleigh, who brings tidings of the execution, relates Nottingham's treachery, which strikes the Queen with fresh concern, as considering that not only her regard for the man is violated, but even her fame stigmatized ; her conclusive lines have a good moral tendency, had it not been enervated with unnatural and unnecessary rhyme.

This tragedy, being founded on historical fact, and that domestic also, has particular influence upon a British audience ; the plot is regular, the scenes well ranged, and the characters naturally drawn ; the language is chaste, the versification harmonious and expressive ; and the sentiments instructive ; it is less bombastic, and more natural than Banks's ; not so nervous or sentimental as Brooks's play, on the same subject, but more consonant to general apprehension and taste ; it most certainly does not deserve the stile of a capital performance, but, as

we

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we think, may very properly stand the test of perusal and performance.

In the EARL of ESSEX, there are but few characters, consequently most of them have some degree of importance. We find the hero brave, loyal, loving and friendly; strongly tinged with pride and violence of temper; too open and bold in speech for the ambiguity and finessè of court sophistry.

Mr. BARRY had every requisite to render this character agreeable; a fine figure to apologize for all the ladies, even majesty itself to be in love with him; a most harmonious utterance for the amorous passages, fine breaks for the grief, and natural spirit for the rage; he was, through the whole, every thing a critical spectator could wish, and must have pleased the most unfeeling. Mr. ROSS, though greatly inferior to the original, has considerable merit in the part, and supports it much better than most capital characters are now supported.

Southampton appears only in the light of a generous friend, warm and steady in his attachment: Mr. SMITH gave us much pleasure in personating of him, and we may venture to say it sat easier on him than any other tragic character he ever played; why then give it to Mr. BENSLEY, who looks and plays it more in the stile of Bajazet, than that of an accomplished nobleman? Mr. REDDISH fills our idea best. Burleigh, as presented on the stage, is cool, politic and resolute; an excellent judge of character, and equal to any task of state. In just veneration of that great statesman's name, we could wish he had not been drawn on the stage so unfavourably; for his plotting against Essex, merely as a check to

his ambition, and a rival in the Queen's favour, is a heavy imputation on Cecil's fame.

Mr. SPARKS represented him with becoming dignity, and gained that attention we have never perceived any other performer obtain, or in the least deserve. Mr. GIBSON is horrid to a degree of pain; he does not lay the leaden mace of slumber on his audience, but buffets their ears with sounds more dissonant than the hum-strum of a hurdy-gurdy. Mr. GARDNER, who played the part in BROOKS'S *ESSEX* at the Haymarket with merit, should do this part at Covent Garden.

Queen Elizabeth is a character of importance, though we think underwritten. She has some weakness as a woman, none as a monarch; however female inclinations arise, royalty maintains pre-eminence, and she will be Queen even over the man she loves. Mrs. HAMILTON, by an abundance of teaching, for she could never get out of leading-strings, made a very respectable figure in the character, and did the author more justice than could be expected from her, especially in the tragic stile; her person, deportment and action, were well adapted. Notwithstanding we have said thus much in favour of the original, our regard for merit obliges us to say, that no part was ever spoke or felt more properly, than Queen Elizabeth was by Miss IBBOT, who played it as we remember one night, and no more, at Covent Garden, because Mr. RICH, who delighted in opposing the opinion of the public, did not concur in the approbation she received. Even at this distance of time, we remember to have been peculiarly struck with her expression in that scene where she gives Essex the ring as a pledge of safety from

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from his foes ; the whole interview was interesting, but these lines she uttered inimitably ; by reading the passage we can scarce conceive the additional force she gave it.

With prudence make your best defence ; but should
Severity her iron jurisdiction
Extend too far, and give thee up condemned
To angry laws, thy Queen will not forget thee.

Mrs. WARD, who once had considerable merit, is now so mutilated by time, that she has hardly a trace of her former self ; therefore, we need not be surprized that she makes such a wretched figure in the Queen, and more especially as the part never came within her compass ; but however we may pity her, as being commanded upon such a forlorn hope, what apology can we make for the managers, indeed, what can they say for themselves, to obtrude performance in a capital light, so very inadequate and disgraceful to a London theatre. Mrs. HOPKINS does not trespass upon the bounds of decency, but merits no other applause than silent sufferance.

Rutland is so circumstanced as to claim our concern ; her anxious love, her perplexed state, and her distracted grief for the loss of her husband, all concur to touch the melting heart ; the character took happy possession of Mrs. CIBBER, and she of the audience. Her merit never shone more conspicuously than in the last act of this play, when abounding sighs and tears gave her just tribute of the truest applause. Mrs. BARRY, though without power to equal this great original, gives very irresistible sensation in this part. Miss MILLER, who rubbed through it lately at Covent Garden, was shamefully imperfect ;

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imperfect ; shamefully we say, because no doubt she had due time for preparation. It is the duty of those who have the greatest abilities to know the author, how much more incumbent upon them who possess such slender talents as this lady, of whose executive powers we will venture to say, that had she been minutely acquainted with every syllable of Rutland, it is not in her power to do one tenth of the part justice.

Nottingham is a very disagreeable, yet we believe a natural character, for where jealousy taints the mind of either sex, all moral and social concerns are rooted up. She requires a good actress, and is a painful task for such a one, being all up hill performance : Mrs. VINCENT was very improperly chosen for the original, seventeen years ago, and we suppose is to retain it for life ; this is rather more absurd than Mr. RYAN's doing the part of Marcus in CATO, when he was seventy, because he had done it when he was five and twenty---For heaven's sake, Mr. COLMAN, without diminishing a worthy woman's salary, have some pity upon criticism, don't compel it to sting through public misapplication, so excellent a private character. Where is Mrs. MATTOCKS ? She sometimes plays tragedy, though not her fort, and must, at least in stage appearance, give tolerable grace to what Burleigh hints of charms. Mrs. STEPHENS, though her powers were not equal to the part, yet was capable of giving much satisfaction in this Countess.

At the Haymarket, last summer, the ESSEX of BROOKES was exhibited ; though not strictly within our plan, being a different piece, perhaps our readers may not be displeased with some strictures on

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the performance. Mr. SHERIDAN was bombastic in the passages of passion, and discordant in the tender ones; hurtful through extravagance of action to eyes, and painful through false modulation of vile tones to ears. Mr. J. AICKIN's Southampton was modest, sensible, feeling, and within the lines of nature, but rather faint for a large audience: if this gentleman could rouse up a little more expression, there is a degree of propriety about him which few reach; why he is placed in such an obscure, disadvantageous light at Drury Lane, none but those who steer that state can possibly say. There are several parts which Mr. PACKER is injudiciously, or partially packed on for, which would fit much easier upon him. Mr. GARDNER, whom we have already mentioned as fit to take Mr. GIBSON's post, shewed, in his playing of Burleigh, capability for supporting a similar cast.

Mrs. BURTON! Mrs. PHILLIPPINA BURTON! was the most mouthing, strutting, staring, Wapping landlady representative of poor Elizabeth, that ever tortured the two delicate senses of sight and hearing. It is impossible to say, amidst such a complication of wretchedness, whether her ungracious countenance, her lumbering figure, awkward action, wild modulation, or barbarous dialect, gave most disgust; let us advise this poetical adventurer to change her pen and tragedy sceptre for the rolling-pin or mop, and then she may become a useful member of society.

Miss HAYWARD, for so inexperienced a performer, shewed great merit in Rutland; her last act was truly affecting; a few vulgarisms, and some Sherdonian oddities of expression, clouded her abilities; but

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but we think she has the materials about her, with proper assistance and diligence, to make in a season or two the third tragic actress in our London theatres; we wish the managers impartiality to make the best use of her capacity, and her the happy prudence to make the best use of herself. Mrs. JEFFERIES is considerably the best Nottingham we have seen. It is remarkable, that the two principal parts in this exhibition, Essex and Elizabeth, were notoriously the worst.

From this tragedy arises the useful observation of that danger and mutability which attends court favour. In a comparison of BANKS's, JONES's, and BROOKES's, the former must be pronounced replete with offensive bombast, forced figures, unnatural ideas, and pitiful expression; the second, regular, chaste and affecting; the third, less turgid than BANKS, more laboured than JONES; nervous, but stiff; wherefore, we recommend that play which has passed review both for action and perusal.



THE

The PLAIN DEALER.

A COMEDY, altered from WYCHERLY:

By Mr. BICKERSTAFF.

THE comedies of CHARLES the SECOND's time were animated with wit, humour and a character strongly marked; but had in general a vicious tendency; our public taste being moralized; though private vices are as enormous as ever, the dramatists of our days make an adherence to decency apologize for all the other essentials.

To rescue from oblivion the sterling ore of antiquity; to purge it of gross alloy is an undertaking worthy of praise; it is like recovering a picture highly finished from obscuring filth; when this is done, without impairing the master's beauties, it shews judgment, and if any retouching is necessary, to blend the addition with an able hand manifests genius; Mr. BICKERSTAFF found the Plain Dealer a good, but an immoral play; this may seem a solecism in expression, but we mean good as to the leading dramatic qualifications; what he has done by refitting it for public inspection we are now to examine, after premising that he has dealt candidly with his original and readers, by marking the additions he chose to make; thus whatever censure or praise they may deserve, becomes directly and fairly his own.

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Manly begins this piece, with opening his own character in a conference with Lord Plausible, who seems a very disagreeable visitant. In the course of their short conversation, they appear strong contrasts; one seems churlishly fond of viewing and describing human nature in the worst light, while the other pleases himself with being the white-washer of frailty; the wide difference of opinion, makes Manly cut short the thread of discourse in a very unhospitable, uncivilized manner; however, the roughness of one and pliancy of the other, have a pleasing effect.

Oakham, a sea domestic of Manly's, seeing the peer treated so roughly, soliloquizes, with marine pleasantry, upon the incident; gives us to understand, that the Plain Dealer is a captain in the navy, that he is just landed from an unsuccessful cruize, and that he had sunk his ship to prevent her falling into the hands of the French: we think this speech of the honest tar's well introduced.

Manly returning with Freeman, is asked how he could treat a peer so roughly, when he makes a reply which we must transcribe as excellent. "You are one of those who esteem men only by the value and marks which fortune has set upon them, and never consider intrinsic worth; but counterfeit honours will not pass current with me, I weigh the man, not his title. It is not the king's inscription which can make the metal better or heavier, your lord is a leaden shilling, which you bend every way, and debases the stamp he bears, instead of being raised by it." After some humorous reproofs to Oakham for admitting a visitor without leave,

Manly

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Manly forbids the admission of any more, male or female,

In continuation of the conference between Manly and Freeman, we find the latter kindly endeavouring to soften the rigidity which characterises the former. One is for strict truth and open speaking upon all occasions ; the other, for giving way reasonably to some customs and prejudices of life, that he may not be in a state of continual warfare with his fellow-creatures. Just as Freeman is making a tender of cordial friendship, Fidelia, disguised in men's cloths, enters, and torments Manly's patience with similar professions ; he charges his female volunteer with cowardice, and upon that principle dismisses her ; she remonstrates against this severity, but in vain.

Here Oakham signifies the boisterous approach of a clamorous old lady, widow Blackacre, who, by description, we find to be the essence of litigation ; so fond of a law suit, that she prefers it to any other enjoyment. Upon her entrance she complains of being kept so long in waiting, to which Manly replies, by asking for her niece Olivia, regardless of the question, she proceeds to the stating of a cause she has in hand ; Jerry, her son, is ordered to put the case, which, after many interruptions, he attempts, but blunders so, that the impatient mother proceeds herself ; till Manly, driven beyond patience, damns the cause, and all the parties concerned. Upon being offered a subpœna, he flounces out of the room, and leaves the widow to lament his Gothic behaviour.

After he is gone, Freeman makes a kind of matrimonial attack upon Mrs. Blackacre, which, for the present, is cut short, under the idea of affection

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for her son. By the next scene, which is an added one, we learn that Manly has fixed his undivided friendship upon a man called Varnish, and his love upon a woman called Olivia, not remarkable either for beauty or fortune; however, it appears, that this odd son of Neptune, upon going to sea, had provisionally left this object of his affection possessed of no less than ten or twelve thousand pounds; from a partial opinion of her being, what he thinks rare, a faithful woman. Freeman goes off to plead in Fidelia's favour, and leaves that female to inform us that she is in love with Manly, that she has taken a disguise to watch an opportunity of gaining his affections, though she knows them to be previously engaged.

The Plain Dealer appears dressed, and signifies to Freeman that he is going out; on being told that it is on a visit to his mistress, with an observation that she must be in the phenomenon stile to engage such a disposition as his, he launches out violently in her praise, because she is consonant in temper, as he imagines, to him. A glaring instance of weakness drops from the blunt captain here, which is giving her unlimited credit for requesting to swear she would not hear the addresses of any person while he was at sea: as a proof of her valuable and amiable qualifications, he desires Freeman to call on him at her lodgings in an hour, observing, that the young volunteer can shew him where she lives.

Olivia and Eliza begin the second act: from what passes between them we find, that the former, though she disclaims all liking for gay life and elegance of dress, is warmly attached to both: through the whole of this scene, she displays contempt of
every

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every thing that is pleasing to her, especially any concern with the male sex : her character opens itself, and shews a very palpable mixture of pride, peevishness, and prudery.

A foot-boy bringing in word that a gentleman, who frequently comes, desires admittance, she protests against the knowledge of any visitors : on being told the person's name, she is rather confused, and wants to make Eliza the cause of his visit ; then gives a character that shews she is intimately acquainted with him. With admirable effrontery she calls up Novel, as if to please her cousin : this alert sprig of fashion no sooner appears, than he enters upon a subject very common in modish life, that is, delineating the characters he dined with the day before ; however, Olivia, who professed herself a foe to detraction but a few lines since, outstrips Novel so much in the dissection of Lady Autumn and her daughter, that he attempts to march off, but is detained.

Lord Plausible being mentioned, the tender Olivia cuts him up too ; and Novel is speaking of him in very harsh terms at the moment he appears. This turns the scales, all immediately becoming complaisance and cordiality. His lordship observing that he met two worthy characters at Olivia's door, Count Leyant and Lord Court-title, there is a fresh field for scandal opened, and every one whose name happens to fall in is sacrificed ; till Eliza, wearied with such stuff, goes off, and Manly is heard squabbling at the door with the foot-boy : he enters, and is astonished to see Olivia in such company ; his vexation and surprize are expressed in pretty rough

rough terms, and she replies rather with upbraiding than concession.

While Novel and Plausible are on, he is much agitated, and treats the *things*, as he justly calls them, with becoming spirit : at length they retire, rather intimidated, to another room.

Olivia's aggravation, when by themselves, rises so high, that he renounces her ; she coolly goes off, and says she shall return soon. Fidelia and Freeman, who have overheard the squabble, join the captain, and feel some rubs from his roused fury ; however, Freeman urges him to demand a restitution of the money and jewels he had placed in so unworthy a mistress's hands. When Olivia appears, Fidelia unites with Freeman in this demand ; to which she replies, that what they ask have been delivered to another person. This awakes the captain, he demands who, she returns, her husband ; and that she dare not hint at their being given back, least he should think she had received them upon unworthy terms.

This affirmative confession of deceit provokes Manly so much, that he bids her go off to avoid something worse than rough words ; she complies, with most provoking indifference.

Mrs. Blackacre, Jerry, and Major Oldfox, are introduced : Freeman addresses the widow in very plain and positive terms, which makes her retort sharply : this encourages Oldfox to mention his claim, which the choleric old dame repulses with severe warmth, and is humorously satirical ; her abuse of Freeman goes too far, when she calls him a *latib-backed* fellow : full of law she leaves both
her

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her old and young gallant, to try if Olivia can influence any of the jury in a depending cause.

At the beginning of the third act, Manly presents himself, solus, violently disturbed in thought at Olivia's perfidious, unexpected behaviour, and lamenting that the injury he sustains so hardly, was not done by a man, that he might have demanded and compelled adequate satisfaction; however, he confesses love for her, in spite of such peculiar provocation to wean his misled affection; while he is wrapped in this painful reverie, Fidelia enters and desires to be heard a few words, which request Manly is loth to comply with, however, being pressed, and mention of Olivia occurring, he joins conversation.

When the supposed volunteer utters harsh terms against his captain's mistress, love gets the better of ill usage, and causes Manly to threaten Fidelia; after this, with great precaution, he acknowledges his passion for Olivia, but confesses it as a great secret; interprets her culpable behaviour in many favourable lights; insists upon Fidelia's going to her house, supposing she may have repented her disdainful behaviour, and may be willing to make some acknowledgment.

The female volunteer undertakes this commission, in hopes of getting the money and jewels returned, but Manly forbids any idea of that kind, and says he is going to Westminster Hall; here the scene concludes, and that which succeeds, places us in view of the law market; where Mrs. Blackacre appears, surrounded with long robed harpies, railing at a solicitor who has pacifically recommended a reference.

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Major Oldfox coming on, a very immaterial, unentertaining scene ensues at a bookfeller's stall, between him and the litigious widow; at length, she is called off by seeing a person who has proposed selling her a chancery suit, upon what she thinks moderate terms. Seeing Freeman, his rival, the Major becomes very crusty, and hobbles after his mistress. Jerry wanting to buy Rochester's jests, but not having money to pay for the book, Freeman lays down the price, and laments that a young gentleman, of large expectations, should be kept so bare; then asks, why he wont give consent to his marrying the widow. This draws from Jerry an explanation of his mother's character, her penury, and spirit of litigation.

Freeman, finding Jerry a good subject to work upon, puts two guineas into his hand, and they form an alliance against the old lady. The squire, being possessed of such an immense sum, goes off with a pleasing remark, that he'll go and pay two shillings he owes, because he believes the man wants it. Manly, harrassed by Mrs. Blackacre, about her cause, enters, declaring he'll be plagued no more with it; when the widow misses her hopeful son, she hurries off with the Major, to search for him. Freeman observing to his captain, that his patience must be pretty well tried, the enraged Plain Dealer replies, that since his coming into the Hall, he has incurred a challenge and two law-suits.

Seeing Novel approach, he wants to sheer off, but being hailed by the beau, brings too. The talkative sprite proposes some insignificant questions, which are replied to with a mixture of roughness and contempt. We cannot help thinking this
scene

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cene a very weak and unnecessary addition, it means little to the plot, has but very faint humour to recommend it, and consequently hangs heavy on attention. What passes between Freeman and Novel, might also be very well spared; when the latter, having made a slip concerning Manly's courage, sneaks off, Jerry Blackacre, full of resentment against his mother, enters, claiming the promised assistance of his friend Freeman.

Seeing her approach, they go off: the widow here presents herself, fuming with passion at the insolence of Jerry, who has threatened to go on board Manly's ship; her concern seems not for the son, but the writings he has got with him, on which her jointure and law-suits depend. She goes off, threatening Manly, as an accomplice in the boy's elopement. Fidelia joins the Plain Dealer, and informs him of Olivia's confirmed infidelity; he doubts for some time, but when the young volunteer says, that Olivia has not only made love to him in direct terms, but that he is to be admitted to her bed-chamber at midnight, Manly insists on his going, which Fidelia declines. Manly then resolves himself to make use of a garden key she has given him. Freeman's appearance cuts short their discourse; the lieutenant informs his captain of Jerry's revolt from maternal authority, and that he intends to make a proper use of that event.

Manly begins the fourth act with Fidelia: after observing, that he has been out all night, and that he now considers Olivia as the vilest of her sex, he discovers disorder in Fidelia's countenance, which shews she has been in tears; he speaks in friendly terms, promising protection: he explains

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the method of confirming Olivia's treachery, which was by passing in the dark for her expected young volunteer ; and desires that Fidelia, in that character, to favour his designs, will write a tender letter to the false fair : her objecting to this, suggests an idea of jealousy to Manly. Upon saying he must either give up Olivia or her, he sternly asks what they have to do with each other : at length, upon an explanation that he only wants through this second appointment, to confront Olivia with irresistible conviction, she goes off to write the proposed letter.

Major Oldfox, though they parted upon such ungentleman-like terms in Westminster Hall, is here introduced by Freeman to the Captain, both as a soldier and an author. The old militarian proposes employing his pen in a relation of Manly's losing his ship, which the tar treats with contempt. Oldfox's remarks upon his own abilities, and Freeman's mode of humouring his absurdity, are agreeably imagined ; but this, like several other scenes, has no kind of connexion with the plot, and seems more calculated to make Oldfox a tolerable part, than to enrich the piece. It appears to us, that the scene which now stands third, would have been more properly placed as second.

The circumstance of Freeman's wanting spirit to quarrel with one who had called him an impertinent, insignificant, ignorant fellow, is somewhat odd for the character of an officer : after the Major retires, we are informed by the Lieutenant, that he has new rigged his charge. Hearing a knock, which is known to be Mrs. Blackacre's, they retire.

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The scene changes to Covent Garden Piazza, where we perceive the widow, who declares she won't set foot in Manly's house without her lawyer. We wish Mr. BICKERSTAFF had placed Quillet's chambers in any other than *Coney Court*, especially as it was to come from a female mouth. Upon Jerry's coming forth in his new habiliments, Mrs. Blackacre takes notice of the change, and being told that he has chosen Freeman for a guardian, she softens, desiring he will go home with her. An altercation here arises, in which the characters are extremely well and homorously supported: being hard pushed, and much enraged, the widow sacrifices her own reputation at the shrine of resentment; declaring, that Jerry is base born: wherefore, his claim to the family estate, or choice of a guardian, can have no validity. With this very creditable subterfuge, she hastens to Doctor's Commons. Jerry, and his new guardian being alarmed with this unexpected declaration, they go off to fight her in her own way, by engaging a considerable detachment of pettifoggers.

We are now conducted to Olivia's lodgings, where we meet that lady bringing on Vernish, her husband: the remarkable palpitation she appears in alarms suspicion, which she takes endearing methods to cast aside; and tells him not only of Manly's return from sea, but of her manner of treating him: here Vernish opens his own character, and shews that he is linked with the woman to impose on an easy, unsuspecting temper. We perceive this rascal to be the *one* friend mentioned by our Plain Dealer in the first act, with such cordiality and confidence.

Olivia mentioning the necessity of taking means to secure the money placed in her hands by Manly,

Vernish goes off for that purpose, and she gets breathing time. By her soliloquy, it appears, that she repents her marriage, and is very apprehensive of danger to her young favourite, the volunteer, should so dark and dangerous a temper discover her attachment. Here Fidelia presents herself: a conversation ensues, which shews Olivia much enamoured and very forward. She proposes flying from her husband; then invites her gallant to a collation in the next room, which we think not very probable, under fear of Vernish's return. Being perplexed with solicitation, Fidelia feigns the approach of a fit; Olivia goes into another chamber for some spirits, and immediately returns in great confusion, announcing her husband's approach: it appears, that while the servant went for a coach, he had changed his riding dress. On seeing Fidelia, he accosts her in very rough terms, indeed very vulgar ones: why would our alterer furnish such passages as these? "By the *Lord*, you shant slip by me---*Damn* you, sirrah"---Fear of death causes Fidelia to own she is a woman; of this the brute takes an advantage, and presses his licentious suit with violence. Her situation here claims pity, and the audience are judiciously left at the end of the fourth act, in a state of anxious concern for her honour and safety.

Olivia, concerned for her rotten reputation, begins the fifth act with Eliza, who comforts her on that point, with observing, that her character was so bad before any late incident, it is past the attack of any fresh injury. Vernish enters, Olivia, conscious of guilt, craves pardon. This draws from him an explanation that the volunteer was a woman, in man's
cloaths,

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cloaths, a discovery made by his pretending to be rude with her. When his wife finds the lover, male or female, has escaped, she turns the tables upon him, and charges Vernish with criminality, where she herself was guilty. Her hypocrisy is very well described; he soothes her passion, and begs Eliza to work a reconciliation.

When he is gone, Olivia, true to vice and effrontery, disclaims any knowledge of a gallant, though closely pressed thereto by her cousin: in short, her hardened, negative insolence here, is very characteristic of a mind steeled against every just and delicate feeling. Her unblushing confidence warms Eliza, and they part with angry terms.

In the next scene we meet Freeman and Manly; the latter mentions Fidelia's escape from Olivia's lodgings, and makes an appointment with Freeman, for him, Oakham, and as many more as he chuses, to meet at half an hour after seven in her chamber. Freeman gone off, Vernish appears, to whom the Captain gives a most friendly welcome. This scene produces natural and pleasing perplexity, by Manly's boasting of the last favour from his supposed friend's wife. The exultation of the one, and anxiety of the other, are entertaining: the Captain, in rapture, mentions a second appointment of amorous nature, and makes his exit, desiring they may meet at supper. In a succeeding soliloquy, we find, that Vernish, in order to convict his wife, determines upon making her believe he is under a necessity of going immediately to Oxford; by which means he imagines her guilt or innocence will certainly be brought to light.

Major

Major Oldfox, Mrs. Blackacre, and Counsellor Quillet, present themselves in the next scene : their conversation amounts to no more than making the widow's litigious character more strongly apparent, and having no further connexion with the piece, may be deemed an excrescence, obtruded upon the original by Mr. BICKERSTAFF : if the scene which now stands eighth, immediately succeeded Vernish's soliloquy, it would have been better. Upon being arrested at the suit of Freeman, as guardian to her son, the old lady bends her high spirit into supplication ; however, mercy lies open but one way, which is by marrying the Lieutenant.

Frighted at the loss of her authority by such a union, she offers Freeman an annuity of three hundred pounds a year, and payment of his debts ; justly surmising, that his view upon her is merely pecuniary advantage. He intimates, that her family has cheated him of four hundred a year, landed estate, and proposes, upon a surrender of that property, to give up the guardianship of Jerry ; this, and a stipulation that she shall allow the young gentleman one hundred pounds a year, is agreed to, and they go off to ratify the agreement.

Olivia is brought forward in fresh expectation of her young volunteer ; Fidelia enters, and in her masculine capacity sustains a very warm attack, with strong sollicitation to make an elopement : upon hearing a noise, and discovering that it is her husband returned, Olivia gives a casket, containing jewels and bank notes to a considerable amount, to Fidelia ; who, upon Manly's entrance, gives them to him. Vernish forces a door open, and attacks
Manly

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Manly and Fidelia; while they are scuffling by the faint glimmers of a dark lanthorn, Freeman, Plausible and Novel enter; when lights appear, the Plain Dealer perceives that Olivia's husband is the identical friend he had selected from mankind. The play now hastens to a conclusion, Manly finding that his volunteer is a woman--we wish this point had been explained more satisfactory---he presents her with a casket, and offers his heart; Fidelia gladly accepts the latter, which she has toiled hard to gain; and makes him acquainted that she is possessed of two thousand pounds a year. We think the catastrophe of this piece very defective, as neither Olivia, Vernish, nor widow Blackacre, are sufficiently punished for the bad principles they manifest upon every occasion.

Take this comedy as it is now offered to the public, we find many scenes of powerful humour, several very languid: for most of the former we are indebted to WYCHERLY, for the latter in general to Mr. BIKERSTAFF, whose alteration has rendered the play more chaste, but not more entertaining. We should have been happy to allow the same degree of praise here we have given the HYPOCRITE, but it is by no means deserved; however, the unities are well preserved, the plot judiciously conducted, the characters, such as they are, properly maintained, and the dialogue easy.

Manly is an uncommon, yet not an unnatural character, his spirit of speaking what he thinks upon every occasion, leads him often to the verge of rudeness, and gives his conversation a very saturnine cast; however, plain dealing in one sense may be a jewel, yet in such a latitude as the Captain
uses

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uses it, social communication becomes hurt by unnecessary, ill-timed truths : if it was commonly practised, according to the known feelings of mankind in general, we might expect nothing but constant bickerings amongst neighbours : indeed, it is not every man that enjoys sufficient judgment to distinguish what are really errors and vices, where, as fools are most apt to give their opinion, the restraint of custom and civility becomes essential.

Manly's singularity pleases in action, but would be disgustful in private life ; he seems to have an honest, unsuspecting heart, but a wretched weak head ; we remember to have seen Mr. QUIN exhibit the Plain Dealer with singular merit ; the cynical roughness being in a great measure his own disposition, became him well ; yet, as being more spirited, we are apt to conclude Mr. HOLLAND better—Mr. AICKIN is indeed a lamentable falling off from both.

Freeman has very little to recommend an actor, the present Mr. PALMER deserves as much praise as can be merited by such an insipid undertaking. Lord Plausible is very little more than a name, he is a very poor contrast to Manly, has nothing to do with the piece, and scarce any thing to say worth attention ; he is totally unworthy of such pleasing talents as both Mr. PARSONS and Mr. DODD possess. Novel is equally an excrescence, and still more below the happy execution of Mr. KING ; however, there is some policy and a compliment to the public in putting good performers on such ungracious undertakings.

■ Vernish is a consummate knave, a dead weight to drag, and will never be so well supported as by Mr.

LEE.

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LEE. Major Oldfox is meant as a humourist, but his influence upon the risible faculties is very weak; Mr. LOVE supports this opiniated, caroethes scribendi coxcomb, better in action than the author has in delineation. Jerry Blackacre we find a very laughable ninny-hammer, placed in several diverting points of view; Mr. YATES no doubt shewed himself a very good actor in the performance of this part; but for true character and powerful simplicity, Mr. WESTON goes far beyond him; nor do we think it too indulgent for criticism to place Mr. W. PALMER second; who with diligence and countenance from the managers, may make a first rate low comedian.

In the character of Olivia, we find an entire want of every amiable qualification; she is proud, slanderous, deceitful, false to a lover who has conferred great obligations upon her, and equally disposed to abuse her husband, for sake of a third person; she is so hateful in principles that a good actress is requisite to make her sufferable, and such we admit Miss POPE shews herself in this part, though both authors have left it very unfinished for representation.

Fidelia is a lady of the romantic cast, resolved to have a man at any rate; if love is an excuse for gross breaches of decorum she may stand excused; however, we cannot help considering her as a reprehensible object. Mrs. YATES gave very adequate satisfaction in personating this adventurous fair one, yet notwithstanding her great merit and greater name, we are not afraid to declare that Mrs. BADDELY pleases us better. Mrs. Blackacre, who gallops on the hobby horse of law, retir-

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ed with Mrs. CLIVE to the neighbourhood of Strawberry-hill, and will not in our judgment return, unless Mrs. GREEN takes her by the hand; Mrs. STEPHENS made some very unsuccessful attempts upon her last winter, and Mrs. HOPKINS worse this. In short we are surprized that the last mentioned lady, who has as little humour as pathos about her, should be bundled into so many characters of importance both tragic and comic. Miss PLYM, and Mrs. W. BARRY may both be justly stiled pretty Elizas.

The comedy, whatever praise it might receive in its original state from the wits and connoisseurs of the last age, or however it may be improved by the present alteration, has yet many very weak parts, and the remarkable fault of having three characters Plausible, Novel and Eliza, very near superfluous. Mr. BICKERSTAFF has softened some roughness of character, and omitted many exceptionable passages, for which he deserved both the praise and profit that attended the undertaking; yet we cannot wish to see the play often, nor can we, as its moral is at best very vague, urge the perusal of it.



TAMER-

T A M E R L A N E.

A TRAGEDY: By ROWE.

THIS tragedy opens in the camp of Tamerlane: the Prince of Tanais, and two other chiefs, make us acquainted with the character of their illustrious master; and point out also that of his brutal antagonist; whose repeated breaches of faith, in contempt of solemn treaties, has brought them to the eve of a decisive battle. Tamerlane approaches, meditating beautifully on the devastation of war. Axalla, with Monefes and Selima prisoners, presents himself at the Emperor's feet, introducing his fair captive, who proves to be the Sultan's daughter. She sues for protection, which is promised in the kindest terms, and she is given, with an insinuation of its being a pleasing task, to Axalla's care.

Tamerlane enquiring whether there is any other prisoner of consideration, Monefes is brought forward: touched with Tamerlane's benevolent reception, he discloses the royalty of his lineage, derived from the Greek emperors; then mentions being made, together with a female he calls a sister, captives by Bajazet.

It appears, by his narration, that the Turk had compelled him to take arms; that being sent to guard the Princess Selima to her father's camp, he had left Arpasia behind as a pledge of faith; and that by Axalla's superior fortune, he had fallen into new captivity. Tamerlane, though he entertains a

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high opinion of the honour and intrepidity of Monefes, yet, from a very delicate principle, defires his sword may reft neuter during the impending battle. Tamerlane goes off with a pious addrefs to the great difpofor of all things, for affiftance. When left alone with Selima, Axalla, who had contracted a paffion for her during his embaffy at the Sultan's court, prefers his addreffes, which from the idea of being brought into a ftate of bondage by him, ſhe at firft treats with feverity; but foftens fo far as to acknowledge ſhe entertained tender thoughts of him, till the duty of a child obliged her to confider him as her father's foe.

She requests being delivered to the Sultan, but this the general obſerves is impracticable, conſidering the ſituation of the armies. Being ſummoned to the field, Selima, yielding to the impuſe of love, forms ideas of his falling in battle, and gives him every conſiſtent mark of tender regard, which animates and fills him with happy preſages of ſucceſs. The ſimile with which he takes his leave is ſuperfluous, and every one of the rhimes, in the two laſt ſpeeches of the firſt act, would be better omitted.

Our author having very judiciously left the battle entirely to imagination, begins his ſecond act with Monefes, who mentions the glorious victory Tamerlane has obtained. Stratocles, the Grecian, brings an account that Bajazet is taken; but being queſtioned concerning the fate of Arpaſia, he can ſay no more than that there are ſome women amongſt the priſoners. This ſends Monefes off, with a damp on that pleaſure which he received from Tamerlane's triumph.

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The conqueror, seated in his pavillion, receives, with sensible reserve, the compliments of his generals, wisely considering himself and his army, but as secondary causes of the success they have been crowned with. The following address to Axalla, ought to be imprinted upon every royal, indeed every subject heart :

Oh Axalla,
 Could I forget I am a man as thou art,
 Would not the winter's cold, or summer's heat,
 Sickness, or thirst and hunger, all the train
 Of nature's clamorous appetites, asserting
 An equal right in kings and common men,
 Reprove me daily ?---No, if I boast of ought,
 Be it to have been heav'n's happy instrument,
 The means of good to all my fellow-creatures.
 This is a king's best praise.

Bajazet is here introduced, swelled with disappointment, rage, and horror. Upon the victor's mentioning that he has a right to demand attone-ment for the torrents of blood shed by and through the Sultan's ambition, a reply of great spirit is made, and even defiance hurled in the victorious monarch's face. Through the whole of this interview, Tamerlane contrasts a spirit of philosophic dignity, to a kind of savage fury ; indeed majesty, in several passages, casts aside every idea of royalty, to become absolutely scurrilous : he rails, curses, swears, and gives the lie most grossly. The manner in which his life is given him, the assignment of a royal tent for his accommodation, and the proposition of moderate terms, reflect great honour upon his humane, generous conqueror ; while his churlish refusal of every favour stamps him a brute.

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Tamerlane's remark of virtuous delicacy, which does not administer benefits through mercenary hopes of reward, would have been much better if it had been expressed without jingle. Upon the entrance of Arpasia, Bajazet makes a fine picturesque assimilation of his own feelings, at sight of the woman he loves, in such a fallen state. When Haly presents her to him, he comments nervously on her disdainful looks, which she returns with bitter reproaches, for causing the wrongs she has suffered.

The appearance of Monefes kindles Bajazet's indignation, which rises higher on the Prince's presuming to approach Arpasia. Being accused by the Sultan of wanting courage and faith, he offers a spirited vindication, which puts the tyrant past all patience, and causes him to hurry off in a frantic fit of passion, leaving the two lovers to a mournful interview; mournful, as Arpasia pathetically informs Monefes, that in his absence, though she had confessed herself his wife, yet Bajazet, deaf to tears and intreaties, had forced her into the ceremony and consummation of a marriage. This scene is wrought up to a degree of melting tenderness, and the act concludes with an affecting separation.

It is a misfortune that the third act should begin with another love scene, so much inferior to that we have just looked over. Axalla, as we find, has with painful struggles, determined to yield up Selima to her father: when the Emperor comes on, murmuring at the thoughts of obligations received, she presents herself, and for a moment he feels paternal softness; but, being told by the Prince that he must receive her as a fresh mark of Tamerlane's indulgence, the monster of pride and ingratitude
breaks

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breaks out, and he goes near giving his benefactor that polite title given the electors of Middlesex---*scum of the earth*---When Selima speaks favourably of Axalla, she comes in for her share: the Prince asserts his own dignity in so becoming a manner, that he puts the imperial scold into a corner. Upon promising to restore him his crown and empire, the savage fixes Tamerlane's head as the only price that can purchase his daughter.

Seeing Axalla shrink, like a man of honour and loyalty, from so base a proposition, he again puts on the bully, drags off Selima, and leaves Axalla without any comfort but that conscious integrity which prevents even the strong impulse of ardent love, from making him undertake a base action.

We next meet Monefes, soliciting an audience of Tamerlane; but being told by the Prince of Tanaïs that the Emperor is in private conference with a Dervise, he goes off to make way for the two last mentioned characters, who enter conferring on a religious subject. The priest, like a true sanguine bigot, rates Tamerlane for giving protection and countenance to Christians. The narrowness of thought, the uncharitable, exclusive opinion of sectarists, which devote to temporal and spiritual destruction all who are not of their own class, are set in a light of just contempt by the following very moral, argumentative, conclusive and beautiful lines:

—No law divine condemns the virtuous
For differing from the rules your schools devise;
Look round how providence bestows alike,
Sunshine and rain, to bless the fruitful year,
On different nations all of different faiths;

And

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And though by different names and titles worshipp'd,
 Heav'n takes the various tribute of their praise,
 Since all agree to own, at least to mean,
 One great, one good, one only Lord of all.

We are bold to assert, that no pulpit ever advanced a more useful, liberal piece of instruction, which wisely considers human nature whether in the torrid, frigid, or temperate zone; whether of complexion black or white, brown or copper colour, as children of one universal, impartial parent.

Being foiled in all his arguments by the noblest principles of reason and humanity, the hot-brained priest tries what a dagger will do, but is there too prevented, by the magnanimous monarch, who disarms, and mercifully, we think too mercifully, dismisses him without any other punishment than reproof. The holy Assassin being departed, Moneses, oppressed with griefs, prostrates himself at the Emperor's feet, confesses the falsehood he had been guilty of, in calling Arpasia his sister, and solicits having her restored as his contracted bride. Tamerlane, knowing her to be Bajazet's queen, justly declines any interposition, and prudently recommends the weaning his affection by martial activity, from the soft bands of love to the thirst of glory.

A very pleasing, and poetical picture of the mind under these different influences closes the third act; the Dervise, who considers Tamerlane's clemency as folly, begins the fourth act, acquainting Haly that he has struck out another scheme for Bajazet's service; by inflaming the discontent of Omar, a powerful chief, who having claimed Selima from
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the Emperor, is refused on account of a preference given to Axalla.

By what Omar says at his entrance, we find, that he considers Tamerlane as under peculiar obligations to him, and ungrateful in refusing his request. The Dervise resumes his inflammatory insinuations, and Haly, mentioning that Selima may be had at her father's hands, the Tartar determines to join Bajazet's cause : hearing, by sound of trumpet, the Emperor's approach, they retire.

A song, suited to the distress of Arpasia, and much better written than songs in general, occurs here. The music ended, she meditates on death, as a desirable refuge from sorrow ; but, as a Christian, nobly resists some great examples of self-destruction. Tamerlane, upon the humane principle of consolation appears, and endeavours to balm the fair one's wounded mind. Bajazet entering while they are in conference, takes a jealous alarm, and bursts into fury like a sprung mine. His vulgarity in the first scene we have been severe upon, but that we find in the scene before us, no lash of criticism is any way equal to.

After bearing more than is possible to imagine, Tamerlane warms so far into resentment, that he delivers Bajazet to the guards, and orders him to be executed : this, by Arpasia's interposition, with the Emperor's lenity, is set aside, and Tamerlane prudently retreats, lest he should be kindled into rage again. What pity it is that Mr. Rowe has made him speak a sort of epilogue to every scene.

The irascible Turk, whose barbarous mind no weight of obligation can impress, goes off, storming

at Arpasia for having saved his life; and disclaiming paradise, because *woman* is placed there. This thought admits of an objection, if we consider the Mahometan opinion, that all the females of this life are, after death, annihilated; 'tis true, the prophet has furnished the future world with black-eyed girls, but we know not whether this justifies Bajazet's extravagant idea. Arpasia, almost sunk with accumulating sorrows, so much increased by the tyrant's vile insinuation of criminality with Tamerlane, is joined by Moneses; their mutual complaints are extremely pathetic, the interchange of affection highly interesting, but the scene concludes with two triplets which we can by no means approve; they are, if we may be allowed the similitude, like yellow fringe upon the border of a mourning gown.

Bajazet now comes forward, making large promises to his new ally Omar, by whose assistance there are favourable appearances of his gaining ample revenge upon Tamerlane. There is something odd here, that Axalla should be made and detained a prisoner in his master's camp; however, he is brought on by Omar in that state. The Sultan proposes to the prince, either joining with him or death; Axalla, with noble firmness, prefers the latter, which, but for Selima's solicitation is resolved on: at his daughter's request, the Sultan defers his sentence, and Selima takes him off to try the power of her persuasion.

Affairs being thus seemingly well disposed for Bajazet's grand design of recovering empire, he concludes the fourth act with a most noble assimilation of himself to Jove engaged with the Titans. Arpasia, again in soliloquy, commences the fifth act:

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we think there is a sameness in this lady's lonely meditations, which rather palls: she informs us of what we already know, that Monefes is made a prisoner. While she is indulging gloomy thought, Bajazet enters, confessing what influence she has over his mind, even in the midst of most important concerns; that even empire and revenge hold but the second place in his heart. He determines, either by gentle means or force, to take her with him; the former he tries in terms, for him, unusually smooth; her disdainful treatment of his solicitation, again kindles up the flames of passion, and he threatens her with death; but supposing that the execution of Monefes will wound deeper than the loss of her own life, he orders the unhappy prince to be strangled in her sight.

The parting of these lovers is particularly pathetic, though we think there is something very disagreeable in the mode of Monefes's catastrophe. Arpasia's end is not totally unnatural, but bears rather too hard upon probability; the word *blast*, twice used in her last speech, is much more becoming a lady of easy virtue than a tragedy heroine, however agitated: the confusion of Bajazet, at losing the woman he loves so strangely, is interrupted by the Dervise, who brings intelligence, that as there are apparent movements in the camp, it becomes necessary to hasten flight: scarce has he finished his message, when Omar declares that they are surrounded, and imputes the discovery of their designs to a prisoner, who, by the Princess's order, was suffered to escape. Bajazet, struck with his daughter's treachery, resolves to take revenge upon Axalla.

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Being told he was the person that had escaped, his fury rages against her, and he makes several attempts to kill her, but some feelings of the father prevent his fatal purpose; at length, hearing the approach of Tamerlane, he consigns her fate to the mutes, from whom she is rescued by Axalla, while the tyrant is once more taken into custody.

After such repeated and capital provocations, we are not to be surprized that the Emperor's lenity gives way to his justice; further forgiveness would have been a prostitution of mercy: the sentence he passes upon Bajazet of being caged, is severer than death, by so much as pain of mind is more insufferable than that of the body. The Sultan's departure is strictly consonant to his behaviour all through the piece, which concludes with a very noble remark upon that impious pride, which forgets the dependant state of human nature, and arrogates to itself the advantages and grandeur of life.

Notwithstanding this play is merely used as an anniversary one, yet, we think, when actors capable of supporting it can be found, that it should stand more forward in the rank of living tragedies. The incidents are various and affecting, the unities tolerably well preserved, the sentiments elevated, and the language adequate without bombast. It is in some places rather too flowery, and the versification so flowing, so seldom broke, that it requires great judgment in several of the parts to avoid monotony.

Tamerlane is a character worth every monarch's imitation, active and intrepid as a soldier; wise, just and merciful, as a sovereign; affable, friendly, and benevolent, as a man: he reflects that credit upon his station, which no station nor dignity can give an unworthy

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unworthy possessor. No higher compliment could be paid King William than marking him out as the original of this pleasing picture.

Mr. QUIN supported Tamerlane with great dignity, but offended by his unnatural swell of utterance. Mr. HAVARD had all the essential placidity, but wanted consequence both of figure and deportment. Mr. SHERIDAN shewed more propriety than either, as to expression, but in appearance and deportment fell very short of the first mentioned gentleman. We have seen Mr. SOWDON do the part respectably. The two present Tamerlanes are not worth mention, they want both internal and external requisites. Omar would do much better for Messrs. BENSLEY and AICKIN; the former of these gentlemen has been placed in such a variety of acting, though always the same, as was scarce ever known; fops, lovers, declaimers, tyrants. Who, but Mr. COLMAN, could have allotted Sir Brilliant Fashion and Barbarossa to the same performer? especially one who has no variation.

Bajazet, though a hateful, and indeed vulgar character, always claims particular notice from an audience; there is a resistive spirit about him which gives pleasure, notwithstanding it is founded upon the worst principles. His pride, ambition, ingratitude and cruelty, are detestable, yet greatly counterbalanced by his noble ideas of independance; he is the most agreeable monster we know, and very great powers are wanted to do the author justice.

Mr. QUIN, in the brutal part, excelled all the Bajazets we have seen, but had no part of the requisite spirit. Mr. BARRY, though better in the latter, had too much harmony of voice and feature to
mark

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mark the former properly ; for though a soft spoken or fair looking man may be a brute, yet such being a deceptive character, does not fill our idea on the stage. In the last scene with Selima, Mr. BARRY's excellence surpasses our praise. Mr. BERRY laboured through the part abominably, and Mr. SMITH has made lamentable attempts upon it : for essential fire, contemptuous aspect, extent and variety of voice, we place Mr. MOSSOP first, at the same time that we allow Mr. HOLLAND great merit ; as the chains and Turkish habit rendered his mechanical movements less offensive than they were in modern cloaths.

Monefes is distinguished by nothing but his love and misfortunes, which reduce him to a most whining state : he is generally given to second-rate actors, though he certainly was drawn for, and deserves capital ones. We have had pleasure from seeing Mr. RYAN exhibit this prince, and pain from Mr. HULL. It hurries us beyond all patience, to think that any degree of managerial authority, whether ignorant or malicious, should force so respectable a performer totally out of his way.

Mr. REDDISH is extremely pleasing and characteristic ; he neither rises above, nor falls below his author, and has more merit than all the other men put together, as it is now played at Drury Lane : why does not Mr. ROSS do it at Covent Garden, where, without any great degree of eminence, he must stand foremost.

Axalla, we thought, could scarcely be worse than in the late Mr. PALMER's hands, but Mr. PACKER and Mr. PERRY, are strong proofs of our mistake ; such a brace of heroic lovers---hoh ! hoh ! hoh !

were

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were surely never seen before. Omar, when performed by Mr. SPARKS, made a very conspicuous figure; at present, he falls off considerably in the hands of Mr. HURST, though he is second best in the play, for we have spoken of Mr. BARRY in the Sultan as he *was*, not as he *is*. The remaining male characters are too inconsiderable for notice, being generally given to the tag-rag and bob-tail of a theatre.

Arpasia's painful situation touches sensibility; we sympathize with her tears, while we are pleased with her spirit and constancy. We could never admire Mrs. WOFFINGTON's croaking of this part; 'tis true, she figured it so elegantly, that her first appearance prejudiced spectators in her favour; but harmony of person was greatly injured by dissonance of voice. Mrs. PRITCHARD played the princess much better, but had not the necessary softness. Mrs. BELLAMY had the proper degree of pathos, but whined. Miss MILLER has stumbled upon the part most injudiciously; while Mrs. BARRY looks, moves, speaks, and feels up to the highest degree of criticism.

Selima is a mere foil to Arpasia, of very little consequence, and therefore very little attended to, yet we remember to have seen Mrs. ELMY give her uncommon graces. Mrs. W. BARRY and Mrs. MATTOCKS are agreeable, but we beg leave to hint that the last mentioned lady has a strong taint of the cathedral stile.

We think the play of TAMERLANE has two conspicuous faults; first, the double love plot, which renders Axalla and Selima very unaffecting: next, the author's neglect of giving Eastern characters something

something of the Eastern stile ; this is a commendable propriety which the author of Zingis has adhered to. The frequent execrations we meet are also censurable, nor can we forgive so many repetitions of the word ALHA, the immediate title of the Supreme Being is not fit for stage expression ; however, this tragedy, well performed, must please in representation, and we cannot apprehend any prejudice from perusal of it : indeed, some scenes are highly instructive, and worthy recollection of the most serious mind.



ALL IN THE WRONG.

A COMEDY: By Mr. MURPHY.

SIR John Restless begins this play, reflecting on himself for taking to wife an improper person ; and enquires of Robin which door she went out, that towards the street, or one to the Park ; being answered through the latter, jealous suspicions arise, which the domestic honestly and sensibly endeavours to remove from his master's mind ; but, like a true self-tormenter, Sir John, though much in love with his lady, from which principle alone he married her, increases shadows into substances, for the strange purpose of working his own perplexity. Robert observes, that this strange mode of behaviour has tainted her ladyship also with jealousy.

The baronet, on hearing that she bent her course towards the Horse Guards, grows very warm ; and sending off Robin, goes himself, fraught with ideas of cuckoldom, in pursuit of her. Belmont and Beverley meet ; the purport of their conversation is a mutual confession of love, the former with Clarissa, and the latter with Belinda. From what passes, it appears, that Beverley has a temper somewhat similar to Sir John's, which is roused into a state of considerable solicitude, by mention that Belinda's father and Belmont's have determined upon uniting their children by marriage ; however, to relieve his friend's pain, Belmont declares, that Clarissa and he have agreed matters so as to counteract the old gen-

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tlement's designs. This gives Beverley great satisfaction, and to increase his rapture Belinda appears, whom he addresses with much gallantry : he presents her his picture, which she partly approves, but thinks a better painter might have been found, meaning Cupid, who forms the most pleasing impressions.

Clarissa and Belmont, who indeed say nothing worth staying on for, retire, and leave their friends to a tete-a-tete. Beverley seems to think Belinda's inclination is not totally his, and from this idea he behaves to her in a strange manner, for which she properly reproves him ; many trifling motives of irritation start up, and the conversation is a kind of snip-snap. At length, justly irritated at his peevish suspicions, she retorts upon him emphatically, and he endeavours to represent the whims of his uneasy, capricious mind, as delicacy. Lady Restless crossing the stage interrupts them, and they go off with a promise from Belinda, that she will let him into that lady's character. The baronet's perturbed comfort, upon not being immediately answered upon ringing at her own door, supposes that some base transactions are going forward in the house, and steps aside to watch.

Having heard the bell tattle, the chambermaid opens the door. Marmalet, a visitor, after some reflections upon their different services, is going off ; her ladyship coming again to the door, and seeing this second-hand gentlewoman neatly decked out, demands her business, intimating, that she supposes it has been with Sir John ; the girl's natural confusion at such an imputation, strengthens suspicion. During Marmalet's vindication, observing her to
have

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have a fresh complexion, Lady Restless, supposing her to be painted, attempts rubbing off the unnatural ornament : finding it real, such a complexion gives her fresh uneasiness, and she orders the confounded waiting-woman to come no more near her doors. Marmalet's going off rather pettishly, helps to feed her jealousy, as annexing such pertness to the idea of a mistress ; and it grows to such a whimsical pitch, that she supposes Sir John has given her the handsome gown she wears. She then enquires for her spouse, and being told he is gone out, exposes still more her own weakness, by rating of Tattle, her maid.

Belinda and Beverley here enter, again resuming the former subject ; his uncertain temper, of which the lady seems to have a very clear idea ; therefore, brings him to expletive preliminaries, which he implicitly subscribes to. Seeing Sir William and Blandford, she hurries him off, and in three lines observes, that though the old gentlemen are laying their heads together to counteract the schemes of love, yet they must be disappointed.

The fathers, in a few lines, express what we have been previously acquainted with, their mutual intentions concerning their children. Belinda being spoken to on the subject, mentions Beverley, as having been once encouraged by her father ; but he observing that he has changed his mind, peremptorily insists upon her obeying the dictates of his will : this tyrannical obstinacy throws her into an overpowering distress of mind, so that she faints, just as Sir John Restless comes on, and in her fainting drops Beverley's picture. While the baronet is engaged upon a principle of humanity in assisting the distressed

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fair one, his turbulent consort sees him from a window, and misinterprets his meaning into gallantry ; upon his proposing to take Belinda into his house, her ladyship flies down to confront them.

The young lady chusing to go home, Sir John humanely and politely gives her personal conduct : Lady Restless entering upon their departure, is quite enraged that she missed them, but picks up the picture Belinda dropped, and hopes from thence to make some discovery.

At the beginning of the second act, we meet Sir John enquiring of Robert for his lady ; seeing her approach with Tattle, he steps aside, to hear, if possible, any thing consonant to his suspicions. When Lady Restless enters, she blames Tattle for being in a conspiracy against her ; then reflects upon the picture, which being that of a man, she supposes to be a former gallant of the unknown lady. At this point of time, while she is railing against husbands, her lord and master peeps in ; during some remarks she makes upon the unequal restrictions of men and women in the married state, he swallows what she says as a proof of infidelity. Tattle being ordered down stairs, the jealous lady wishes she had never seen her husband's face, which kind compliment he returns aside : she contemplates the picture, admires its beauty, and feeling perfume puts it near her nose, this Sir John takes for kissing it. While she goes on to compliment the portrait, wishing that she had such a man, the baronet enters tip-toe, comes behind, looks over her shoulder, and seems to approve her choice of a gallant : at length, his patience being quite exhausted, he snatches the bauble ; a squabble ensues, wherein mutual mistakes occur laughably ; he charges

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charges her with guilt, and she warmly recriminates upon him; he upbraids her with the picture, and she him with the lady he was assisting, till the scene rises into a degree of peculiar pleasantry: at last he goes off to find some proofs against her, and she goes off to attain some against him.

Sir John re-enters soon with Robert, desiring him to look at the picture, and enquires if he can distinguish who it is, insisting at the same time that he can tell if he will, he tries every means to pump some intelligence out of him, but without a satisfactory answer. A Footman comes on and enquires for Sir John's; the Baronet asks his business, and takes a letter for Lady Restless from him; which upon perusal appears to be written by Lord Conquest in his Lady's absence, as an exculpation of the guilt with which Marmalet was charged in the first act; and which, by the tenor of his Lordship's letter, has since been enforced by Lady Restless.

Sir John, still in a state of egregious mistake, interprets all this to his wife's dishonour, employs Robert to go and enquire for Mrs. Marmalet, and seems more alarmed at being told she visits Tattle; he appoints a meeting too with the waiting-woman in the Bird-Cage-Walk, and cautions Robert to extreme secrecy, desiring at the same time that she may meet him masked. Matters thus settled, he goes to search for the original of that picture which he found in his wife's possession.

Belmont and Beverley succeed the discontented sprite conversing upon their amorous concerns; and it appears that Belmont's father, Sir William, has positively declared against his union with Clarissa; however he assures Beverley of never interfer-

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ing with his mistress, Belinda; notwithstanding which, that very odd mortal goes off in a stile that we know not well whether he is pleased or displeased. Sir John enters, and by the introduction of what's o'clock joins Belmont, in whom he can discover no likeness of the picture: Beverley re-entering accosts Belmont, in phraseology the author seems fond of, my boy, dear rogue, &c. Sir John cruises round for the purpose of discovery, considers Beverley very minutely, and draws conclusions of his being the original of that picture which has given him so much uneasiness. The behaviour of Sir John here has no doubt humour, but we think the author has sacrificed probable nature to catch at laughter. Belmont and Beverley being very justly surpris'd at his behaviour, he thinks they laugh at him; indeed the exercise of a cane over his shoulders would better suit his behaviour, but that he escapes.

At length Beverley knowing the picture to be that he gave Belinda, catches jealous feelings, especially as Sir John puts it hastily into his pocket, and upon being asked another sight of it retires precipitately into his house; this sets the tinder-tempered lover into a blaze, as supposing his mistress has given that token of regard to another gallant; the act concludes with a short and unnecessary soliloquy of Sir John's, intimating that he must prove the identity of Beverley.

The two young ladies, Belinda and Clarissa, meet us at the beginning of the third act, still conversing upon their matrimonial projects; the latter seems to hesitate at some resolves she has taken, while the former appears to laugh at her diffidence;

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the caprice of Beverley is mentioned again by Belinda, who, notwithstanding such a ticklish temper, cannot avoid loving the man: Clarissa very justly remarks that there is some reason to doubt her friend's temper, being rather like the man's she complains of; this Belinda denies, and Beverley is introduced to speak for himself; after a few lines, Belmont asks for the picture, which she cannot find, and charges one or other of them with having it, this nettles Beverley: Seeing the capricious lovers ready to squabble again, Belmont and his mistress very prudently retire from the approaching storm.

When they are gone the agitated swain upbraids his lady very severely, for having given, as he supposes, his picture to a more favoured gallant; his childish behaviour she only laughs at, and indeed it deserves no other treatment. She leaves him in a state of dissatisfaction; but returns soon with Clarissa, they pass him by, sneer at his uneasiness, and thereby increase it much; in soliloquy he expresses himself with vehemence, and determining to know the bottom of the matter he resolves, when they are out of sight, to visit Sir John, whose house he knows by having seen him go into it.

Lady Restless meeting Robert with some cloaths over his own, stops him to search the pockets for letters; not finding any, she renews her former accusation against the servant, that he is her enemy and in combination with his master; hearing a rap at the door she listens, and, Tattle coming on, enquires who is at the door, then upbraids her for going out without leave; on being informed that she went to bring Marmalet for their mutual justification,

fication, this is construed into a fresh crime by her Ladyship, and she resolves upon visiting Lady Conquest, having had no answer to her letter; Tattle, true to her name and station, throws out a supposition which gratifies Lady Restless's suspicions, by telling that Robert was at Lord Conquest's, desiring Marmalet to meet his master in the evening.

While the wretched wife is enjoying this piece of information, a servant acquaints her that a gentleman below wants to speak to Sir John about a picture; hoping some discovery from this interview, she orders him to be shewn up stairs; Tattle's intelligence, which she seems willing to enrich with all the ornaments of scandal, is interrupted by Beverley's approach. After mutual salutation they enter upon the subject of his visit, when they plant thorns in each other's breast by a chain of misinterpretations; he looks upon it as certain that Belinda gave Sir John the picture, and to confirm the matter her Ladyship feelingly describes the situation she saw them in during the fainting fit; adding, that she believes her husband capable of any vile action.

This scene is admirably well wrought up, as the confusion of mistakes arise from very probable appearances, and the characters part under conviction that their fears have been well founded. The scene changing to the Park, Sir John enters before his own house, fully persuaded that he has discovered his wife's paramour; just at this instant he sees Beverley coming from his house, and giving Robert a gratification for his trouble; when the jealous lover perceives the jealous husband, he accosts him with a degree of peevishness which is answered

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Answered in the same stile : Here recrimination pleasantly ensues, and the puzzle of circumstances is kept up in a pleasing manner ; each catches eagerly at what flatters his own opinion, while jealousy gives applause that she makes them such ridiculous fools.

Stung to the quick, when Sir John leaves him, Beverley declares that he will have one interview with his false mistress to vent his mind, and then, however painful it may be, renounce her for ever ; here she enters with Belmont, and Clarissa, who are the most commode polite companions we know ; for they come on without any business, say little, help to make out a laugh, and complaisantly leave their friends to battle as long as they like.

Belinda seems inclined to coquette it with her gallant, but neither her smiles, nor sallies of wit, can clear the wintry gloom of Beverley's brow ; it scowls heavily upon her till the storm bursts in his pronouncing an everlasting farewell : At length, after considerable acrimony on both sides, by his mentioning the circumstance of her being seen in the arms of a gentleman, shews her his mistake, which, from a spirit of resentment, she determines to improve for the sake of additional mortification.

His declaration of love, and the regard he has for her future happiness, notwithstanding the baseness he thinks her guilty of, are marks of an ingenuous and delicate mind ; however, she properly triumphs and keeps him on the fret till he almost becomes an object of pity ; his asseverations of never approaching her again are carried too far ; indeed the scene wants curtailings, for it harps too long upon one string. Belinda concludes the third act with placing jealous lovers in the light DRYDEN

has done great wits, that it is within the pale of madness or just on the edge of it.

At the beginning of the fourth act he seems to verify her remark by meditating in a manner almost frantic, and upon receiving, by the hands of his servant, a letter from her, the delirium rises; our author has here given a fine scope for acting merit, but it is not easily hit off: The inseparable pair, Clarissa and Belmont, come on while he is in a painful reverie, they rouse him, and recommend a reconciliation with a woman they think he cannot help loving; he remains obstinate, yet drops several expressions which plainly indicate that his heart bends that way; the circumstance of her fainting fit, which gave rise to Lady Restless's strange narration being explained to him, he is shocked at the idea of his own brutal behaviour, and fears to approach the injured fair, but by the encouragement of friends resolves to attempt the reconciliation he so much wishes: The pleasing discovery of Belinda's innocence transports her lover into almost as extravagant joy as her imaginary falsehood gave him pain, he goes off, and his dove-like friends follow.

Belinda mourning her lover's unaccountable temper appears next, enquiring of Tippet whether any message is come from him: Sir John enters, when by Belinda's charging his Lady with having weaned Beverley's affection from her, Sir John opens a fresh field of perplexity, by accusing Beverley with a design upon his wife; Belinda's regard makes her hesitate for some time, but on being assured by the Baronet that what he has said may be relied on, she in her turn resolves to disclaim him,

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Sir John, soon after leaving her, appears in the Park, in expectation of Marmalet; a woman comes on masked, who, confessing great fear, begs admittance to his house; knowing that Lady Restless is not at home he admits her, and orders that they may be private. We next meet Tattle acquainting Beverley with the mischief his picture had occasioned; he wants to see Sir John for sake of explanation, but she advises him not to stay on any account, however the argument is ended by her seeing the Baronet conducting a woman in a mask. Beverley's suspicion takes alarm, and for the sake of discovery he consents to be put into a closet where he may overhear.

By the by, this listening is a most ungentleman-like action, the worthless fruit of a mean, suspicious heart. Sir John leads forward his Mask, which proves to be no other than his own crooked rib; having gone something too far while he supposed her Marmalet, he tries what soothing will do, but she remains inexorable, and going for pen and ink, as resolving to give her brother an account of the disagreeable situation she is in, she finds the closet where Beverley lies concealed locked; this proves fresh cause of suspicion, and being laughed at by Sir John she grows more impatient. The Maid is thrown into confusion and pretends to know nothing of the key, but being forced to produce it, throws it on the ground and runs away.

On perceiving a man, her Ladyship screams out, and Sir John, at Beverley's unaccountable appearance, revives his jealousy; Beverley endeavours to apologize, but cannot obtain a hearing; he is beset both by Sir John and the Lady, whose mutual at-

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tacks place him in a very disagreeable situation ; at length Beverley threatening a duel if his picture is not returned, the Baronet's courage fails him, and he gives it up ; after which the young gentleman retires with a declaration, that when reason can be heard he shall be ready to convince them of their error. Sir John, glowing with suspicion, renews the verbal war with her Ladyship, in which, like a true female, she maintains her part ably ; threats and reproaches of an angry nature are vented reciprocally, and they conclude the fourth act with very virulent terms.

Blandford, Sir William, and Belmont, meet us, the former observing that all matters relative to the marriage are settled, goes to call his daughter Belinda. From an intermediate conference between Sir William and his son, the latter discovers an inclination to evade the match his father has provided for him, and pleads the lady's aversion to it ; the old fellow grows warm and insists upon the point, which obliges Belmont to say, if the Lady is willing he shall be ready ; but this condescension he only makes from an assurance that she will never be brought to compliance ; however in this he seems greatly disappointed, for Blandford comes on proclaiming with joy his daughter's readiness to obey ; she formally declares her sentiments to the utter confusion of Belmont, the fathers go off to take a cheering glass and invite him to participate, after a single question to Belinda he follows them.

She in a short soliquy declares that her determination is serious, but Clarissa's claim to Belmont striking upon her mind causes some impediment ; to her maid Tippet she vents her spleen against Beverley,

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verly, desiring that all his letters, and a bracelet, may be returned, claiming her's in exchange; she gives one also to inform him that his falshood has forced her into a compliance with the match her father has proposed.

The succeeding part of this scene shews Belinda in a very natural pleasant view of love-sick agitation; just as she is entering into the most solemn resolutions never to see his face again, a servant acquaints her that Beverley requests admittance, she orders him to be shewn up, and bids Tippet retire. Her gallant at his entrance pleads pardon for his misconduct, which she peremptorily denies, he solicits her acceptance of the picture recovered from Sir John, but she asserts it is come from Lady Restless; when she mentions her marriage with Belmont, his submission and supplication changes to very severe retorts, which work her into tears, and drive her off with a farewell for ever.

In a short scene with Tippet he shews what fast hold she has of his heart, and goes off to find means of clearing matters; she returns, and having the same feelings for him which he has for her, is persuaded by the waiting-woman to seek an explanation from Lady Restless, for which purpose she orders a chair. Belmont enters and blames her for causing him such perplexity, she pleads Beverley's falshood. The gentle Clarissa appears, much warmed with a supposition that she has been much imposed on by Belmont and Belinda; when the last mentioned lady goes off, Belmont wants to persuade Clarissa that she misconceives matters, but intimating that her behaviour seems the effect of jealousy, her pride is hurt, and she leaves him abruptly, declaring

declaring that Belinda shall have her thoughts upon paper.

Sir William enters to his son, declaring all is now ready for consummation : Belmont, by way of gaining time, gives a material reason for declining the match, no less than the lady's having a blemished reputation ; this alarms the old baronet. Blandford, full of the wedding, comes enquiring for his daughter ; being informed that she is gone to Sir John Restless's, he entertains some fear, and this circumstance corroborates Belmont's insinuation to his father ; they all go off in pursuit of her. Tattle conducts Beverley in ; a few speeches pass between him and Lady Restless, when Sir John rushes in with fresh complaint : Beverley attempts to discuss the point calmly, when Belinda enters, which occasions a very laughable jumble of jealousy. While their passions are in the full tide of recrimination, Blandford and Sir William appear, Lady Restless maintains perplexity, by charging Belinda with making her miserable. Belmont and Clarissa appear : Sir William, confirmed by what he hears of Belinda's blemished reputation, desires his son to take the lady of his choice. This occasions some rubs between the old gentlemen, and Blandford declares against any connexion with those who could slight his daughter.

Clarissa, without any point being cleared up, patiently suffers Belmont to take her hand. Belinda is offered to Beverley by her father ; Lady Restless says, if he will marry the object of her jealousy, she will be satisfied ; and Sir John says, that Belinda's consent will quiet his mind. This brings matters to an explanation, with regard to the picture ; but Sir John
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and his lady laying fresh charges against each other, he goes off to bring on conviction, and she follows to prevent his having a private conference with his confidante Robert.

All the characters go off, and leave Belinda and Beverley to make up their bickerings in a tender, natural, agreeable manner. The other characters soon return, when it appears, that Sir John and his lady, by what conviction we know not, are satisfied; the union of Belinda and Beverley is agreeably confirmed by Blandford's insisting upon it; the piece concludes with mutual assurances of regulating temper better for the future; the lady's concluding rhymes we don't admire.

Never did criticism toil through such a pantomimical jumble of incidents as this comedy, especially in the last act; and there is such a similarity in most of the scenes, that we have been extremely puzzled to find words for the account of them, without saying the same thing over and over again.

Time and place are very well preserved, but the plot is unpardonably intricate, and not sufficiently elucidated at the catastrophe; the four leading characters are exactly alike, save two being married and two single. From a natural impetuosity in Mr. YATES's temper, and his knowledge of the stage, great expectations might have been formed from his exhibition of the precipitate, weak, chimerical Sir John Restless, who catches at the shadow of offence, and entirely sets aside the reasonable investigation of the circumstances which pain his mind; not one critical idea could be formed but he fulfilled to a very particular degree of satisfaction; and we are surprized how Mr. KING has brought himself

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himself to such an exact equilibrio with the original : without borrowing from his predecessor any thing, he equally gains and pleases our attention ; we cannot point out any precedence that should take place between these two gentlemen in this play ; if any preference must be given, the last mentioned perhaps may claim it, as having a more pleasing, though not a more chaste utterance.

Beverley is a stranger object for a batchelor, than Sir John is for a husband, captious, fretful, and suspicious to an intolerable degree, so much that we think Belinda's suffering such repetition of his insolent airs, and uniting with him at last, is an impeachment of her understanding ; love we know works unaccountable effects, but we think the jealousy of this play so strained and improbable, that to us it seems carried to the last degree of folly.

The gentleman who first appeared in this amorous Quixote being retired from theatrical connections we are not at liberty to name him, but must assert that his merit was inimitable ; Mr. CAUTHERLEY, oh la ! oh la ! oh la ! only serves to pain remembrance with a dismal contrast to what we have seen. Belmont is such an insipid daudle, it would be cruel to expect any thing from an actor in the representation of him ; no body need wish to dispossess Mr. PACKER of him, and whoever does will not, we imagine, have more merit ; Sir William Belmont and Blandford being equally insignificant may repose quietly enough in the somniferous possession of Messrs. BRANSBY and BURTON, as tame a pair as e'er made audience nod.

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The character of Lady Restless is exactly similar to that of her husband, a childish shadow-hunter, a perplexing termagant, fond of misery, and constantly in pursuit of it: Miss HOUGHTON, notwithstanding a lisp, and the Newcastle mode of pronouncing the letter R, had a very particular merit in this turbulent Lady; yet we have great reason to be surprized why Mrs. PRITCHARD was not the original, whose acting in the JEALOUS WIFE gave such just and general satisfaction; at present the part is supplied by Mrs. HOPKINS with more ability than she shews in most of her undertakings.

Belinda is very like, though not quite so great an oddity as her lover; how Mrs. YATES could be appointed her representative is impossible to say, as she never had, nor never will have, any degree of comic expression: Mrs. ABINGTON goes infinitely beyond her, and seems to fill up the author's intention perfectly. Clarissa is too insipid for any actress to make a figure in, she impaired the real merit of Mrs. PALMER, and lies heavy on Mrs. W. BARRY.

Upon the whole, we must condemn that hurry of incidents, and that sameness of character which we find in this piece; nor do we perceive any very obvious moral; the dialogue is easy and spirited, but not enriched with sentiment; it is almost entirely a kind of peevish chit-chat: This comedy, had there not been one previously called so, should have been named the PICTURE, for that is the axis on which it turns; this brings to mind a remark of Mr. QUIN's, at a consultation, what name to give the

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SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND ; his opinion being asked, Why, says the cynic, I have always thought that a play should take its title from the most striking incident or character ; and, upon this principle, advise you to call it the LADDER and HAT ; for, d---m me, if I see any thing else in it worth notice. ALL in the WRONG is kept alive by bustle, and may exist upon the stage, but is a very poor companion for the closet.



BARBAROSSA.

A TRAGEDY: By Dr. BROWN.

OTHMAN, an officer belonging to Barbarossa's court, and a slave, open this piece: the former, being told that a stranger requests admittance, after a pretty account of the unknown person, desires him to be conducted in. Upon Sadi's entrance, Othman approaches to embrace, and give him the most cordial salutation, which he declines in angry terms: from what ensues, it appears, that this honest Algerine, filled with indignation against Barbarossa, as murderer of their late good king, considers Othman, from his place and habiliments, as an abettor of the usurper. His zeal, for some time, is deaf to reason; but, when Othman mentions that his stay at court was in pity to the Queen, and to watch some favourable opportunity of just revenge upon the tyrant, Sadi softens. A melting picture is given of the oppression Algiers labours under, and the sad situation Zaphira is in from the murder of her husband, the exile of her son, and being tormented with the amorous sollicitation of him who has been the cause of all her woes.

Othman observing that assassins are dispatched to find and destroy Selim, Sadi's impatience again breaks out, but is moderated by his cooler and more politic friend, who advises him to leave the court, which advice, hearing trumpets proclaim the approach of Barbarossa, he takes. The tyrant, on his

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entrance,

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entrance, asks concerning the execution of five persons, sacrificed for what he himself had been guilty of, and delivers himself in the haughtiest terms of ambitious pride. Observing a pensive cast in Othman's countenance, he demands the meaning of it; then mentions his surprize that young Selim should be a voluntary exile, when he might find protection from him.

Aladin here brings intelligence that Selim is no more, the circumstance strikes Othman so that Barbarossa perceives it; however, he gives it a favourable turn. The Prince thus disposed of, another care takes up the usurper's thoughts, how to prevail on Zaphira: for this he asks the assistance of Othman, with promises of great reward if he succeeds, and bids him go before the account of her son's death has gloomed her temper. His supposed friend being gone, he indulges his satisfaction at Selim's fate, and confers with Aladin, a very proper agent of barbarity, desiring him to spread a report that the widowed Queen has at length consented to become his wife.

As he is going to visit her, his daughter Irene meets him; perceiving her in tears, he checks the untimely sorrow she wears. She comes, as it appears, a suppliant from the Queen, to beg he wont persist in his command to see her; this she urges very tenderly: when he speaks of Selim's death, her tears flow afresh. This enflames him, and he demands the cause, which appears to be gratitude for his having ransomed her from a state of captivity: instead of applauding her delicate sensibility, Barbarossa is enraged that she should have received freedom from his foe, and goes off, commanding
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her not to acquaint the Queen, whom he resolves to possess, with Selim's fate.

Irene, struck with her father's stern, obdurate resolves, declares her intention of aiding Zaphira's escape, the first favourable opportunity. The humane attachment of this princess to distressed innocence is very amiable, and gives a most favourable impression.

At the beginning of the second act, we meet Zaphira, bewailing her hapless lot, bereft both of husband and child, and enslaved by their destroyer. Upon Othman's appearance she mentions her son's fate; being told that Barbarossa assumes the name of king, and means to see her, she execrates the monster, and ardently wishes some means of escape, but as there is a strict watch kept Othman deems that impossible; therefore, recommends external acquiescence, as the only method of gaining that liberty which may make her escape practicable: however hard to put on dissimulation in her case, however painful to a mourning wife and mother, she, after many struggles, to work the means of revenge, promises that her friend's advice shall be pursued. Barbarossa approaches, with softened looks and amorous salutation, which she evades, by observing, that her heart cannot be weaned from the first object of its regard, that she could not return his affection, and begs, if he really loves, a proof of it, by giving her liberty to seek her father.

The usurper endeavours to persuade, by drawing a pompous comparison between his own powerful grandeur, and the unsettled obscurity of that state which she wishes to be in: dead to all joys and splendor, she perseveres so far in her request, as to
kneel

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kneel at his feet. This moves Barbarossa to reproach, which she returns with great bitterness of expression : when, as a stroke of art, he offers to enthrone her son if she will marry him, her passion rises to its utmost pitch, and she pours curses on him. Finding she has been informed of what he meant to keep from her knowledge, he says the report is not true ; however, seeing through and detesting his designs, she peremptorily declares against his suit ; this draws threats from Barbarossa, which she replies to with spirited dignity.

Thus baffled, the tyrant soliloquizes in great perturbation, during which Aladin enters, to whom he tells his disappointment and distraction ; to calm which, the convenient tool of royalty acquaints him, that the murderer of Selim is arrived : he immediately desires to see him, and Selim, under the title of Achmet, is introduced. Upon receiving a ring from the supposed slave, Barbarossa, after giving him freedom, enquires how the affair was transacted.

His curiosity being gratified, he promises Achmet considerable reward, bids him go to the Queen, and tell her that Selim, with his dying breath, requested to heal the wounds of his country, that she would share Barbarossa's bed and throne : he also recommends the stranger to Othman's care, and goes off with Aladin to a banquet.

An anxiety of thought, perceptible in Othman, occasions Selim to enquire the cause of it, but he obtains no distinct answer : the loyal Algerine, fired with indignation, not only at his lawful prince's death, but having the murderer before him, throws off his assumed allegiance to Barbarossa, and lays his hatred open ; this, we think, very inconsistent

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consistent with the scheme of policy he has laid down for assisting Zaphira ; however, it gives him an opportunity of declaring his friendly sentiments respecting the Prince, who, with gradual caution at length reveals himself.

Most dramatic discoveries, of this nature, are either trifling or improbable ; Selim's we take to have a touch of both : for though Othman says no time can blot out the remembrance of his lustrous eye and graceful features, yet he cannot recollect him without adverting to a scar, which the poet has very unaccountably called *beauteous* ; had he been an Irish author, this would have been named a bull. Well, this ornamental scar is produced, at which Othman very properly exclaims, *Am I awake !* and recognizes the Prince immediately ; nay, sees every lineament of his father's face in his countenance. Selim mentions the manner of getting *Barbarossa's* ring, by which he has passed unsuspected ; he asks tenderly for his mother, and mentions the tyrant's order for seeing her ; but Othman, fearful of discovery, wishes him to quit the court.

Secure in his disguise, he determines to stay and watch a fit opportunity of revenging his father's blood ; that his design may not appear romantic, he speaks of having seen Sadi and Almanzor, who, with a chosen band of citizens, have promised to storm *Barbarossa's* palace. Othman gives precautionary advice, and Selim concludes the second act with an interesting and very spirited supplication to his father's shade.

Irene, notwithstanding her father's harsh commands, holds Selim in tender regard ; and knowing him through his disguise, expresses, at the beginning
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of the third act, anxious concern for his safety. He enters, and endeavours to avoid her, but she avows knowledge of him, and with great generosity of spirit, warns him from the court, taking on herself the task to tell the Queen he lives. When he mentions revenge, as a main motive of his staying in the palace, her filial affection is alarmed, and she utters strong apprehensions for her father. He urges Barbarossa's guilt, she pleads herself his daughter, and again tenderly urges his departure, which he seems to acquiesce in, if allowed an interview with his mother. She retires, and leaves him to view his perilous situation, which he does with very becoming fortitude; then requests from an attendant slave audience of the Queen.

Zaphira appears, who, as well as Othman, has strangely forgot the features of her darling son: she enquires respecting Selim's fate, he tells her that he was witness of it, and literally fulfils Barbarossa's commands respecting Selim's last request: Zaphira fires with indignation at such an insult to her son's memory; seeing and pitying her agitation, he changes his tone, and gives her a glimmering of hope that the prince is still alive; says he was his companion in exile, and spread the story of his death to gain an interview with her, he bids her maintain her resolution with becoming confidence, till a stroke can be struck for her delivery, and sends her off in a state of much greater comfort than he met her.

Being alone he indulges that grief which in her presence he was obliged to smother; when Othman and Sadi appear, he asks how the night wears, which they inform him approaches the mid-hour; he communicates the purport of his interview with
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the Queen, and is told his friends in the city burn for the hour of action; mentioning that Irene knew him, his friends press immediate departure, but he determines to be near for the assistance of a mother, threatened with violation. He desires, upon hearing how matters are concerted, that the tyrant may be left for his particular vengeance; Othman reminds him of Irene, but with noble firmness he declares himself above the influence of love in such a cause. When the midnight watch warns them to part, Selim gives a humane charge to shed none but guilty blood; the Prince, in soliloquy, ruminates upon the awful circumstances depending; he examines his heart, and emphatically apologizes for working by underhand means, that revenge which he could wish to obtain by open and honourable war. The author has laboured, and not unsuccessfully, to make this scene a solemn preparation for the great event that is in agitation; the stillness of the night, the murmuring surge, the moon rising in blood, all call attention, to the wished for point.

Irene begins the fourth act with Aladin; it appears, that terrified by an ominous dream, she has desired to see her father, who comes on in a very churlish mood at being disturbed during his banquet; she expresses her apprehension of lurking danger, and relates her dream with strong colouring, which Barbarossa treats with contempt.

Aladin comes on, and informs him, that a rumour prevails of young Selim's being alive, and in the city; though loth to admit fear, he orders the watch to be doubled, and commands Achmet to be brought before him; this alarms Irene, who

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 begs hard that he may not see Achmet, but the usurper will have his way, and drives her off the stage in a state of painful perplexity ; being alone, conscious guilt rises to his view, and seems to stagger his resolution ; but knowing in his situation, the danger of remorse, he resolves to suppress the feelings of conscience. He demands of Selim, if he be really what he has represented.

This unexpected question rather confounds the prince ; Barbarossa, with violent threats, asks if Selim is not alive ; Selim, with a dagger's point at his breast, evades fate, by braving it ; however, the usurper commands he may be strictly watched, then orders the marriage writes, vowing, that Zaphira shall, during the current night, be joined to him in wedlock ; she comes on and is questioned, whether her heart has relented, by persisting in refusal, she enflames him so that he calls his guards to drag her to the altar ; whether Mahometans have any altars we are not entirely clear ; these compulsive measures occasion her to cry out for her absent son. Selim hearing her voice, enters, Barbarossa orders him to retire ; Zaphira very oddly we think, prays his assistance, for what could the aid of a single, unarmed slave avail against the determination of a monarch surrounded by guards ; however, Selim tries what solicitation will do ; finding that vain, he makes a final effort with his dagger ; Barbarossa evades the blow, and delivers him to the guards, when prisoner he avows himself the identical Selim ; this sudden discovery of her son, and his desperate situation, overwhelms Zaphira ; she faints, and he, running to embrace her, they are torn asunder.

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When the Queen recovers, Barbarossa renews his order for her being forceably borne off; this again reduces Selim to his knees, the usurper wishing to touch her heart in the tenderest vein; orders her son to be borne to the rack; so severe a trial works her to compliance with the marriage; the Prince, with noble disdain and unshakeable resolution, declines life, gained by so shameful a purchase; she catches the noble flame, and both defying the tyrant's power, they are carried off separately.

Aladin increases the confusion and rage of Barbarossa, by giving certain intelligence of a conspiracy in the city; he orders out spies to discover, if possible, the members of it, then commands Selim's immediate death, and goes off breathing threats, dreadful in their tenor.

At the beginning of the fifth act, we again meet him; enquiring whether proper precautions are taken, and observing, that the spies which were sent out, have found no trace of tumult; the second watch he dooms for Selim's final moment. Irene once more comes a suppliant to her father, and with tears offers up petitionary complaints, yet is treated with unusual, or rather increased severity; however the urgent occasion, and the violent emotion of her heart, in favour of the man she loves, oblige her to persevere till her enraged fire orders the guards to force her off.

Left alone, the perilous condition ambition has brought him to, presents itself to his disheartened mind; upon enquiring for Othman, Aladin says, that he is fled, and that much danger may be apprehended; the following line uttered in Barbaros-

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sa's fury is unpardonably vulgar, "Why then, may all hell's curses follow him," this fresh alarm precipitates the Prince's fate, and the usurper with most vindictive ideas goes to see him put to the rack, unless proposed concessions mitigate his sentence.

Selim, surrounded by executioners, appears no further concerned than that his remains may not be treated with disrespect; but that seems an unnecessary application, since the great foe who robs him of life must have equal power, with perhaps equal antipathy over his breathless body, that he has to the animated; Barbarossa entering, orders him to be raised from the ground, and asks if his life is not forfeited upon his own principles; the Prince desires him to take it; however, the tyrant, for Zaphira's sake expostulates, till contemptuous refusal, and sound of the second watch, end the fruitless conference, Selim is left to the rack, and they are binding him with cords when Irene's entrance gains him a small respite. Far from upbraiding her with her father's cruelty, he treats her in the tenderest manner, and strives to soften that woe she feels, as supposing herself the means of his being discovered, she begs forgiveness, which he most readily grants, and commits his mother to her care.

Just as they are fixing him to the rack, a tumult is heard, which fills him with spirit, and the guards with dismay. Aladin enters in confusion, and calls off the officers, &c. to assist Barbarossa. Irene now again melts with tenderness for her father's danger, and hearing the clash of swords goes off in a state of distracted grief: Othman entering with a party frees

Selim

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Selim, and gives him a sword, with which he goes to seek his mortal foe.

The tyrant, like Macbeth, tied to a stake, knows not what step to take. Othman encounters, and gives him a mortal wound, at which instant Selim enters. Seeing Barbarossa prostrate, he regrets that his hand had not given the blow, and calls on the murderer, that he may awake the stings of remorse. His words have the desired effect, and when he finds the expiring monster contrite, his generous temper takes so humane a turn, that he solicits heaven's mercy in his favour.

After the tyrant begs protection for his daughter, and draws his last breath, the Prince gives orders to stop all hostilities. It is an amiable stroke when Sadi moves that the body of Barbarossa should be dragged about the streets, for Selim to forbid such inhumanity. Zaphira, filled with apprehensions, enters, jealous of her steps, and fearful of every one she sees ; but soon perceives with joy the happy revolution of affairs. After mutual congratulations, and pious acknowledgment to heaven, Selim asks for Irene, who, by Othman's order, has been taken care of. Zaphira pronounces her worthy to partake his throne, which he acquiesces in, and then concludes the piece, deducing its general moral in the following agreeable lines :

Now let us thank the eternal pow'r : convinc'd
That heav'n but tries our virtue by affliction :
That oft the cloud which wraps the present hour,
Serves but to brighten all our future days.

Though Dr. Brown has in a previous advertisement, pompously paraded his steady adherence to the

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the ancient drama in this composition, yet, I believe, had he not mentioned it, no reader would have found it out; he has indeed, been scrupulously nice with respect to time and place, but vigour of genius is wanting, and there is much more labour than fancy: from the former he has devised a plot, which presents us with several striking incidents, and works on to a just, agreeable and instructive catastrophe; but being deficient of the latter, expression in many of the scenes is so languid, that if it does affect, it must be more through the merit of the actor than the poet.

Barbarossa is an ample subject for detestation to work, not a ray of virtue can we perceive to light his gloomy frame; haughty, revengeful, lustful, and cruel. A wretch, eaten up with impious passions, and an entire slave to each of them; a curse to himself, and a plague to human kind; at least, that part of it which unhappily came within his sphere. There is such a mixture of gloom, fire and affected softness, that it requires very uncommon powers to give this part due force. Mr. Mossor made it so conspicuous, that we may justly say, as the author no doubt formed the character for him, so nature formed him for it. We cannot describe how amazingly he improved his original, and strengthened many weak passages which must lie heavy on performers of less ability. Alas! Mr. BENSLEY, Mr. COLMAN puts you as Marlborough did John Duke of Argyle, upon all the most hazardous attempts: for heaven's sake, resign the sovereignty of Algiers; dont mislead yourself, by thinking that goggling the eye-balls will give the idea of a stern aspect; nor imagine, that pushing one should-

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er before the other, and rolling like a Dutch long-boat in a rough sea, can pass for dignity of deportment. We would most humbly, in the sincerity of friendly wishes, advise you to change places with Mr. CLARKE ; a prudent retreat is no small part of generalship ; if the managers should threaten you with a Chancery suit for declining his mighty appointment, try if you cant get him to stand the roast in a similar manner.

Achmet is an object as amiable as his vile competitor is horrid ; his situation very critical, his undertaking noble, his filial piety unshakeable, his honour inviolate, his love disinterested, his friendship warm, permanent and affable ; his disposition gentle, even to foes, and his courage equal to any danger. As a part, he is much better written than Barbarossa, yet many of his speeches want nerve, which indeed Mr. GARRICK most amply supplied. There are several breaks and passages in this character, which seem in perusal to have very little meaning ; yet he sent them thrilling through the heart, and then brought them flowing from the eyes.

Mr. SAVIGNY, being as yet a very young performer, in point of practice, which is highly essential to perfection, we must, as far as impartiality will admit, touch him with a lenient hand. Whether this part was chosen by himself, or recommended by some anxious friend, we can by no means approve it for a beginning ; there is such an intricacy, so many transitions, such a variety of manœuvres, commonly called stage business, that two seasons, at least, are necessary to cultivate properly even such abilities as are naturally adequate to the undertaking.

The

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The gentleman who has lately appeared, seems to speak, bating the barbarism of *furm* instead of *firm*, *sturn* instead of *stern*, and being faultily emphatic upon *thy*, *thee*, and *thou*, with propriety: the middle and lower notes of his voice harmoniously distinct, and either from nature or imitation, very like those of Mr. GARRICK. We are told, that he has very extensive powers; we wish it may prove so, but we could not perceive any prospect of such. In the midst of first night fear, they will break out, though irregularly. Mr. BARRY and Mr. MOSSOP, shewed their excellent voices in their first attempts, though doubtless not so well as they have since exerted them.

Mr. SAVIGNY's countenance, from what we could discover, seems pleasing and expressive, but wants those strong lines of expression, which command a large audience. His person appears well proportioned, for what there is of it; and, if he would lay aside that mode of holding his head over his shoulder, which seems to be caught from Roscius, his positions and deportment would be more natural. Upon the whole, we are willing to allow him the best acquisition by much, that our theatres have made since Mr. POWELL's commencement.

The dress of Selim is a very disadvantageous one, and resembles, as a wit in one of the boxes observed, part of the Queen's Zebra's wardrobe: We wish Mr. SAVIGNY, who has good feelings, and pleasing expression, every improvement and acquisition necessary to place him deservedly at the head of his new profession.

Sadi

Barbarossa.

Sadi has little to distinguish him, but a commendable spirit of loyalty, which he expresses in respectful terms, during the first scene. We remember to have seen Mr. DAVIES's performance of this part; it was sensible, and suitably spirited: We are in no shape pleased to find Mr. HULL undertaking this patriotic Algerine; declamation and paternal tenderness are his stile, not love nor fire.

Othman is also a faithful subject to a dead monarch, and his oppressed heir: Mr. HAVARD did him justice, but we think Mr. CLARKE much preferable; indeed, he has not such dazzling rays of merit round him, as the original had to encounter.

Aladin is one of those obsequious, execrable court jackalls, who are never happier than when providing prey for the lion authority; he has not one word to say that can render his villainy passable; Mr. GARDNER is rather better than Mr. MOZEEN was.

Zaphira is drawn with dignity as a Queen, constancy as a widow, and tenderness as a mother: through the whole piece she claims respect and pity, when we dont see her, she is nevertheless kept in our view.

The dead are not so often flattered as the living; Mrs. CIBBER can now give no compensation for praise; nor, if she could, would it avail in this work; but let gratitude, as well as judgment, place her for the peculiar feelings she raised, far before Mrs. YATES. Her tenderness was truly pathetic, and the resistive parts delicate, her countenance a matchless index to the whole. Her successor has a voice too full for softness, and a countenance more expressive of disdain than sorrow; yet, as things go

at present, the stage might rejoice if only one half ^{Barbarossa.} of the capital parts could shew the merit she has in this.

Miss MILLER is more tolerable in Irene than any thing we have seen her in yet, though a poor, whimpering daudle from beginning to end; we mean these last words of the character, and prefer the lady mentioned to Miss MACKLIN.

From the tears it has drawn, we may conclude this is not a bad acting tragedy; however, being upon the whole but a middling effort of genius, we think it meagre food for contemplation in the closet.



MUCH

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

A COMEDY: By SHAKESPEARE.

Leonato Governor of Messina, begins this piece, perusing a letter from Don Pedro, of Arragon, by which he is informed of that Prince's arrival the same evening; he questions the messenger concerning a battle which has been fought; this occasions honourable mention to be made of one Claudio, a young Florentine; Beatrice enquires for Benedick, and is tartly witty at his expence. The Prince entering with his suit, salutes Leonato; Benedick happening to let fall some words, Beatrice immediately attacks him, and a short altercation of quibbling raillery ensues, more pregnant with pleasantry than meaning. While they are playing the game of snip-snap, we find Don Pedro has accepted Leonato's invitation, to stay a month or more at his house,

When all go off but Claudio and Benedick, the former asks the latter if he has noticed Leonato's daughter; after humorously giving his opinion of her, he obtains from Claudio a confession of love for the young lady; this he acquaints the Prince with on his return, who seems to approve Hero as an object worthy of affection: Benedick, from an assumed contempt of amorous feelings, puns and quibbles ludicrously, not only upon the subject of Claudio's passion, but upon matrimonial connec-

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tions in general; his remarks occasion the Prince and lover to retort, by observing, that he, for all his boasting will fall into the snare; however, the confident batchelor thinks his freedom in no danger, and proclaims himself possessed of unshakeable independence; Pedro sends Benedick off to acquaint Leonato he will attend his supper.

Claudio being alone with the Prince, professes at large his affection for Hero, and that it may not seem a sudden start of fancy, declares, that he loved her before his going to the war, they have lately been engaged in; then solicits Pedro's assistance in favour of his suit, which is readily and cordially granted to him, for which purpose the Prince, knowing there is to be a masquerade, lays a scheme for founding Hero's inclination; which is to assume the character of Claudio, and in that shape to make strong declarations of love.

This settled, they go off to make way for Antonio and Leonato; the former tells the latter that a servant of his has overheard the Prince declaring a passion for Hero, and that he intended mention of it to her during the masquerade; this seems very improbable, there being no time for Antonio's receiving such a piece of information, as one party enter immediately upon the other's departure; Leonato, though he does not seem to lay much weight on the discovery, nevertheless, determines to acquaint his daughter with the matter, that in case it should be fact, she may be the better prepared.

When the old gentlemen disappear, Don John and Conrade come forward; from their conversation, it appears, that Don John is of a surly mischievous disposition; that he hates obligations, and
would

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would injure the Prince, his brother, who has lately restored him to that place in fraternal affection, which his ill behaviour had forfeited. Conrade advises him to a smoother mode of behaviour, but villainy being the first fruit of his heart, he determines to pursue it. Upon being informed by Borachio of an intended marriage, he goes off with the malevolent intention of disturbing the peace of those who never injured him.

At the beginning of the second act, Leonato enquires whether Don John was not at supper; mention of this gloomy blade, occasions sprightly Beatrice to remark shrewdly upon the contrast between him and Benedick; the following part of this scene is made up of rhapsodical observations, upon love, marriage, maids and batchelors, by this loquacious lady; the masquers coming on, Pedro singles out Hero, who has been prepared by her father; he solicits conference, but is baffled by her answers; while they retire, other characters play on each other; among the rest Benedick and Beatrice encounter, whose phrases are bandied to and fro with all the quickness and levity of a shuttle-cock: under cover, she cuts him up to himself; after a dance, Don John comes forward with Borachio, they mistake Claudio for Benedick, and acquaint him that the Prince is in love with Hero, desiring him to prevent so inadequate a connection; when they are gone off, Claudio meditates upon what he has heard with most strange feelings of jealousy; the Prince had to him declared a design of wooing Hero in his favour; yet now he is surprised to hear that what they had agreed upon has been put in practice; nothing but the absurdi-

ties

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ties lovers are capable of, could possibly justify this.

While he is in peevish mood, Benedick comes on, and jestingly confirms his jealousy, which teizing of his ruffled temper, occasions a sudden retreat. Pedro approaching, is charged with having caught the affection of Hero, which he declares to be won in favour of Claudio; the Prince mentioning a quarrel Beatrice has to Benedick, he gives a very fanciful and humorous account of his own message by that volatile dame; just as he has finished his account, she appears; seeing her, he hastens off, as if terrified at the thoughts of encountering so nimble and bitter a tongue.

When Pedro says to Beatrice that she has *put down* Benedick, she makes a reply rather reprehensible, as raising a gross idea, "So I would not he should do me, my Lord, lest I should *prove* the *mother of fools*."

The Prince, perceiving a cloud on Claudio's countenance, demands the reason, to which he receives equivocal replies; Benedick is guilty of a vulgarism when he says the Count is *civil* as an orange, the name being *Seville*; at best, like many others in this play it is a strained pun.

When Pedro declares that he wooed Hero for Claudio, Leonato gives her in form to the raptured lover; this disposal of her cousin, sets Beatrice rattling once more; she is again blameable for replying to Pedro as she does, when he says, "shall I get you a husband, I had rather have one of your *father's getting*". When she is sent off by her uncle, Claudio's wedding is fixed for that day week, and by way of making the interval tedious to im-

patient

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patient love, pass more agreeably, Pedro proposes to attempt working Benedick and Beatrice into a violent affection for each other ; with this pleasant proposal the scene concludes.

Don John enters with his hopeful associate Borachio ; the former wishing, at any rate, by any impediment to cross Claudio's marriage ; to effect this purpose, Borachio lays a villainous plan, through his intimacy with Margaret, Hero's waiting-woman ; for this infamous project John promises the tool of his iniquity a thousand ducats, and they go off to forward their execrable plan.

Benedick enters in Leonato's garden, with a boy, whom he sends for a book : In soliloquy, he expresses surprise, that Claudio, who formerly used to laugh at love, should fall so effectually into the snare himself : He then proceeds to enquire, whether his own mind can be so strangely altered ; and, with a very natural, pleasant degree of confidence, supposes such a metamorphose impossible. This speech is much in favour of the actor, and truly agreeable to the audience.

Seeing the Prince, Claudio and Balthazar approach, he retires behind an arbour : after a pleasing song, they enter upon the subject of Beatrice's love for Benedick ; perceiving that he listens, all possible symptoms of violent affection in that lady are mentioned, which Benedick swallows the more greedily, as being advanced and avouched by so grave and venerable a character as grey-headed Leonato. The train of deception is admirably carried on through this scene, and when Benedick is left alone to ruminate upon what he has heard, he

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does it most humorously. He seems to fear some flashes of wit, if he should appear serious in a love affair, yet argues himself into a favourable opinion. She enters, and invites him to dinner; her words, though not kind, or even polite, he interprets favourably; and concludes the second act with resolving to get her picture.

Hero, Margaret, and Ursula, open the third act. Hero sends Margaret to draw Beatrice into the garden; it appears, that the same design is now to be put in practice upon her, as Leonato and Claudio wrought upon Benedick, in the foregoing act; for this purpose Hero instructs Ursula. Seeing Beatrice steal into a woodbine arbour, they proceed on the subject of Benedick's love for her, and anatomize her spirit of pride and coquetry pretty severely: while they blazon him with the warmest terms of commendation. After they have exhausted praise upon one, and satire on the other, they go off. From what Beatrice says, when alone, it appears, that their conversation has produced the desired effect, and occasioned her to think seriously of Benedick. This scene has considerable merit, but being exactly similar to that which ends the second act, cannot take equal possession of an audience.

Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick and Leonato, appear next: the Prince declares his intention of staying till Claudio's marriage is consummated; then proposes going for Arragon, and that Benedick should go with him. This draws on some observations which charge Benedick with being in love, the Prince and Claudio mention several pleasant symptoms to prove their suggestion: when Benedick walks

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walks aside to speak with Leonato, Don John enters, and charges Hero with being disloyal; this naturally surprizes the Prince and her lover; who, upon being offered ocular demonstration of her licentiousness, jointly determine to expose her, and break off the marriage.

When they go off, we are presented with Dogberry, Verges, and Watchmen. This scene exhibits in the Constable and his associate, a very laughable picture of blundering, ignorant consequence; the neglect and villainy of nocturnal guards, is very well, and keenly touched upon: after giving the watchmen charge to look sharply about Leonato's house, Dogberry goes off. Here Borachio and Conrade enter; these worthy gentlemen, not suspecting eves-droppers, talk over the whole of the plot against Hero, how Margaret being substituted for her, Claudio had swallowed the deceit, and determined upon exposing his intended bride in the temple; the watchmen having overheard this hopeful conference, take them into custody, and hurry them off the stage.

Hero next enters with Margaret, they converse about a wedding-suit; Beatrice joins them, and professing herself ill at ease, Margaret archly puns upon Benedick's name, by advising her to lay some *Carduus Benedictus* to her heart. After some pleasant raillery upon Beatrice's complaint, they retire to dress Hero for her nuptials.

In the next scene we are entertained with a very whimsical account which Dogberry and Verges give Leonato of the two men the watch have taken up; their roundabout, superfluous manner, is truly diverting. Leonato, wearied with their verbosity,

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desires them to question the culprits, and bring him the examination. At the beginning of the fourth act, we meet the bride, bridegroom, priest, and all the nuptial guests. Upon the Friar's asking Claudio if he is not come to marry the lady, he answers no; upon questioning Hero, she replies in the affirmative; to the next interrogation, whether any lawful impediment is known, Claudio replies in a strain not very intelligible to the company, till he explains the matter in such lines as we think worthy transcribing.

She's but the sign and semblance of her honour ;
Behold how like a maid she blushes here :
Oh what authority and shew of truth,
Can cunning sin cover itself withal :
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue ? would you not swear
All you that see her that she is maid,
By these exterior shows ? yet she is none,
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed,
Her blush is guiltiness not modesty.

So unexpected and heavy a charge, supported by the Prince and Don John, strikes Leonato to the heart; and so far overpowers his unhappy daughter, that she faints. When the accusers are gone, the wretched father breaths forth his sorrow in very pathetic and bitter plaints; patience is urged, and a vindication of Hero attempted by Benedick and Beatrice, but Leonato seems from such reputable evidence, to think the accusation just. The Friar, in a most sensible, humane, fanciful address, takes up the injured lady's cause, who speaks of her own innocence with melting modesty. Her father, upon a surmise that it may be the effect of some base design,

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design, delivers himself with very emphatic spirit : the Friar, who prudently prefers moderate measures, desires that a report of her death, in consequence of slander, may be spread, in order to work out her exculpation ; or to give an opportunity, if guilt is confirmed, of secreting her from the world. To this salutary advice Leonato agrees. The other characters being gone off, Benedick and Beatrice remain, who both entertain a favourable opinion of Hero ; after urging him to espouse the cause of her cousin, a pretty entertaining declaration of mutual affection, comes from these whimsical lovers ; and Benedick, in compliance with his mistress's earnest desire, goes off, fully bent on challenging Claudio.

Dogberry and Verges, with their prisoners and others, next appear ; this examination of Conrade and Borachio, confirms the laughable idea we have already entertained of their consequential examiners : after much quibble, they are confronted by the watchmen, who unfold the affair of Don John's bribing Borachio with a thousand ducats to slander Hero ; this discovery being made, they are ordered to be carried before Leonato ; this part of the business falls to the lot of Dogberry and Verges, the former of whom, upon being called an ass by Conrade, makes some very risible remarks.

At the beginning of the fifth act, Antonio is comforting his brother Leonato, who replies to his consolation, in terms that we must offer to our reader's perusal, as truly beautiful, and strictly argumentative :

I pray thee cease thy counsel,
 Which falls into my ears as profitless
 As water in a sieve ; give not me counsel
 Nor let no comfort else delight mine ear ;
 But such a one whose wrongs doth suit with mine ;
 Bring me a father who so lov'd his child,
 Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
 And bid him speak to me of patience.
 But there is no such man ; for, brother, men
 Can counsel and give comfort to that grief
 Which they themselves not feel ; but tasting it,
 Their counsel turns to passion, which before
 Would give preceptual medicine to rage,
 Fetter strong madness with a filken thread,
 Charm ach with air, and agony with words :
 No, no, 'tis all men's office to speak patience
 To those that wring under the load of sorrow ;
 But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
 To be so moral when he shall endure
 The like himself : therefore, give me no counsel,
 For there was never yet philosopher
 Who could endure the tooth-ach patiently ;
 However, they have writ the stile of gods,
 And made a pish at chance and sufferance.

Don Pedro and Claudio entering, the old man
 accosts them in angry terms, which they wave,
 though Claudio receives a regular challenge from
 him, and both of them from Antonio. The Prince,
 in palliative terms, laments Hero's death, but asserts,
 that the charge which occasioned it was founded in
 truth ; this, as he refuses to hear a vindication of
 her, sends off the old gentlemen violently agitated
 with passion. No sooner do they disappear, than
 Benedict, ripe for quarrel, comes forward ; they
 joke with him, but find that he is thoroughly bent
 upon a forceable vindication of Hero's blasted re-
 putation ;

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putation; however, they jeer him, by giving the matter a ludicrous turn, and make mention of Beatrice. Benedick is neither to be frightened norfoothed, and leaves them, promising revenge upon Claudio.

Dogberry and Verges here bring on the prisoners Borachio and Conrade, who make a full confession of their slanderous guilt to the Prince: this unexpected intelligence, as may be well supposed, strikes him and Claudio with sorrowful astonishment. Leonato entering, after having been acquainted with the villainy, receives from Borachio a second confession; however, in the zeal of resentment, he charges the injury his daughter has received against the Prince and Claudio. After some exculpatory addresses upon their side, he softens, and proposes, as Hero is irrecoverable, that Claudio shall marry a niece of his; this being agreed to, they go off, after Dogberry, with farcical solemnity, has complained of being called an ass.

Benedick comes on with Margaret, whom, after some quibbling, and not very decent speeches, he sends for Beatrice. When alone, he pleasantly describes his love-sick situation: the lady comes on, when a very unimportant conference ensues, which ends just as it begins: Ursula communicating the discovery of Hero's innocence, they go off to hear it more at large. The next scene at Hero's monument is, and we think justly, omitted in representation.

When the author brings us to Leonato's house, we find Benedick soliciting the Friar's matrimonial assistance, upon which Leonato mentions the manner how he had been tricked into love. Pedro and Claudio

Claudio appearing, according to appointment, Hero, under cover of a mask, is brought on; when Claudio solemnly receives her at the Friar's hand, she reveals herself to the astonishment and joy of her first intended husband. The explanation of this seeming riddle being referred to another opportunity, Benedick and Beatrice, by the intervention of other parties, conclude their match, and so concludes the piece.

When we take a general view of this comedy, we must be surprized that SHAKESPEARE himself could make so much of so little; the plot has rather a romantic air, and is, in point of merit, but very moderate; the unities are not grossly violated; the catastrophe is satisfactory, the language easy and spirited; many of the sentiments discover fancy and good sense, and the characters are well supported.

Benedick is a very pleasant effusion of genius, we have no reason to allow him any virtue, or to charge him with any vices. He is a humorist possessed of very laughable peculiarity, we don't often meet such a personage in private life, yet we are glad to see him on the stage, especially when represented by Mr. GARRICK.

In speaking of our modern Roscius, after what has already been offered, we must either limit our praise, or say over again what has been said before: general suffrage has for many years authorized the warmest encomiums upon this great man in Benedick; it has been set down by many leading critics as his best comic character, but this opinion we cannot implicitly admit, notwithstanding we are willing to allow the pre-eminence of his significant features,

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features, the distinct volubility of his expression, and his stage manœuvres ; in the scenes of repartee with Beatrice, his distinct vivacity gives uncommon satisfaction. It is a character not so well suited to his age and figure as it was some years ago, yet we have no idea of any performer now on the stage who could render it so agreeable as he still can.

We have attended Mr. KING's performance of Benedick with much critical pleasure, and if we had never feasted upon Mr. GARRICK's superior merit, 'tis highly probable we should never have wished for any thing better.

Mr. LEE, if he had not laboriously methodized good natural requisites into most offensive oddity, might have deserved considerable reputation in this part ; as it is, though nature has suffered so much from palpable art, he has his admirers, and in some few passages really merits them. It is painful to think that any man who does not want sense, should become such a clock-work actor, mistaking mechanism for ease, and stiffness for propriety. We have been tortured both in eyes and ears by Mr. SHERIDAN's barbarous attempts on this part.

Claudio is a gentle youth, who falls suddenly in love, and gives up the object of his passion with less feeling, in our apprehension, than he ought : there is nothing in the part which requires, or could shew great abilities, yet it is much too important for Mr. CAUTHERLY's very feeble abilities, and was much better supplied by the late Mr. PALMER, though in some measure a marrer of blank verse.

Leonato is a very respectable, uniform personage ; a sensible, feeling father, who utters several sentiments decked with suitable stile, that do the

author

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author great credit. When warmed by the supposed guilt of his daughter, his expressions, if the actor does them justice, must affect every heart capable of impression: we are sorry to remark, that Mr. AICKIN is by no means capable of working this essential effect, or, if capable, has not been able to shew the least trace of it; he fails extremely in attempting to describe the force and delicacy of paternal feelings.

Mr. BERRY went as much beyond the tender parts of Leonato, as the last mentioned gentleman falls below them. It is much to be wished that old men of a serious cast were put into abler hands; the stage has had an irreparable loss, in this particular, by the death of Mr. POWELL, especially as Mr. Ross, whose capabilities might be very respectable in this view, manifests most wearisome negligence.

There is no point of excellence in which SHAKESPEARE has more distinguished himself than in the variety and propriety of his characters: if we look through many pieces, especially those of the last twenty years, we shall perceive a disgusting sameness of stile; lords and valets, ladies and chambermaids, maintain nearly the same dialogue; such insipidity SHAKESPEARE's good sense, knowledge of nature, and powerful genius disdained: a great number of striking instances might be offered from his works, in proof of this assertion; and, among the rest, his Dogberry and Verges, who are as whimsically imagined, and as well supported, as any characters we know; their solemn buffoonery and blundering importance, must be rich entertainment for the gravest mind.

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Mr.

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Mr. TASWELL, whose dryness of humour, quaintness of expression, and laughable cast of features will never be excelled, gave every idea of Dogberry that the author seems to have meant; at present, Mr. PARSONS, though not quite equal in excellence to his humorous predecessor, well deserves the warm applause he receives. Mr. HARTY, who has a most peculiar and happy countenance for the caricature of low comedy, is the best Verges we remember to have seen; laughter feels some injury from not having a little more of him. All the other male characters in this play are so immaterial, with respect to performance, that we deem ourselves excusable in declining mention of them; and for the same reason two of the females only will come under consideration.

Hero is an amiable young lady, thrown into a painful and pitiable predicament; the part is pretty, but feeble; it requires an agreeable, though not a great actress. Having said thus much, we believe our readers will readily concur in opinion, that it need not be more pleasingly supplied than by Mrs. W. BARRY.

Beatrice seems to have engaged as much of our author's attention as Benedick, and is equally well supported; as a child of whim she is extremely pleasant. Mrs. PRITCHARD was so excellent in this part, and struck out such unison merit with Mr. GARRICK, that her uncharacteristic corpulence was always overlooked. Mrs. WOFFINGTON we have heard receive considerable applause, which she well deserved; and though we could wish to see Mrs. ABINGTON's superior talents put into possession

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of this part, we don't think ourselves unjustifiable in allowing Miss POPE some share of approbation.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, supported by capable performers, will always please in representation, and does not cast any damp upon the great fame of its immortal author ; at the same time, we do not consider it as making any addition thereto. It is undoubtedly an agreeable, spirited composition for the stage, but can never be of any great importance in the study.



T H E

The R E V E N G E.

A TRAGEDY: By Dr. YOUNG.

THIS piece opens with judicious solemnity. A night scene, attended with elementary concussions, lightning, thunder, wind, hail, &c. introduces Zanga, the captive Moor, who, from perturbation of mind, enjoys the storm. Isabella, who appears to be his mistress, through tenderness of regard, follows him into the lonely retreat of gloomy meditation; her solicitations and tears draw from him an elegant and spirited account of what has laid the foundation of his discontent.

Hence, it appears, that being son of a Moorish monarch, at war with Spain, he fought in a battle where his father was killed, and he himself made prisoner. That becoming Alonzo's, the Spanish general's slave, the victorious commander had given him as humane and friendly treatment as could be wished; but, upon some slight occasion, in heat of passion, gave him a blow, which to Moorish tempers, proves an offence never to be forgiven.

Having painted the agony of his mind to Isabella, who in vain urges patience, she tells him that an express is arrived from Alonzo; having devised some means to damp the progress of that chief, he prays for favourable intelligence, and goes off to question Don Carlos concerning it.

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Manuel and Carlos are now introduced, by whom we find that Alonzo, notwithstanding Zanga's treachery, has obtained another compleat victory, attended with much slaughter of his foes. We are also informed, that Carlos was freed from a bondage among the Moors by that general, whom as a friend he had deputed as an advocate in love to the beautiful Leonora. We find likewise, that Alvarez, the young lady's father, from a love of wealth, countenances Don Carlos's passion, knowing that he is in hourly expectation of a fleet immensely rich.

Here the object of his affection appears, led by her hoary father, who, after warmly urging her acceptance of Don Carlos, leaves them to an amorous tete-a-tete; the lover presses his suit with much tenderness, but her inclinations don't appear to wear that cordial condescension he seems to wish.

She evades his warmest attacks, and leaves him to receive the triumphant Alonzo; who, upon his entrance, declares more satisfaction in meeting his friend, than in the charms of fame and conquest. After terms of salutation and reciprocal regard are interchanged, Zanga comes on, informing Carlos of news from the port, to receive which he goes off.

Alonzo being left with the Moor, opens the secret feelings of his heart, which, surrounded by a blaze of glory, is yet wretched. He informs Zanga, that while he should have acted as the ambassador of love for his friend, Leonora's charms had compelled him to become the principal; a faint exculpatory circumstance is mentioned, that having received no letters from Carlos, he concluded him dead; this miscarriage in correspondence, it ap-

pears,

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pears, has happened through Zanga's treacherous, underhand dealing, to work his own sinister purposes.

Seeing Leonora, the captivated conqueror goes off to meet her, which gives Zanga an opportunity of uttering some lines, fraught with most vindictive malevolence. When the lovers come on, a long, laborious, and, in some places, laughable scene ensues; the whole purport of which, is a violent struggle of pride and love in the woman; love and friendship in the man. Our author has here made an attempt upon the power of action, injurious to that power; he has indulged his own imagination contrary to the probability, at least the representable probability of nature; for which reason the last scene of the first act is generally much and commendably curtailed on the stage: at the conclusion, Alonzo gives us a most unmeaning jingle of rhimes, sounding much, meaning little.

The second act commences with Zanga and Manuel, informing the audience that Don Carlos's fleet is wrecked, and with it his fortune; hence Zanga suggests Alonzo's union with Leonora.

Ifabella coming on, he makes enquiry of her concerning some material circumstances, sends for his tablets, and ruminates, in an emphatic soliloquy, upon the connexion of circumstances; wherein he displays a fund of policy for deep intrigue.

He determines upon working Alonzo to a marriage with Leonora, from which he draws hopes of a tempest that may wreck their peace; some lines he utters concerning that passion which he is endeavouring to raise, being nearly equal to any we have
met

met in any author, it would be unpardonable not to transcribe them.

I have turn'd o'er the catalogue of woes
 Which sting the heart of man, and find none equal.
 It is the hydra of calamities :
 The seven-fold death—the jealous are the damn'd——
 Oh jealousy ! each other passion's calm
 To thee, thou conflagration of the soul,
 Thou king of torments ! thou grand counterpoise !
 To all the torments beauty can inspire.

Upon Alonzo's entrance, Zanga, with profound artifice, congratulates him upon the certainty of possessing Leonora ; the generous minded Spaniard, though he doats on the woman, still struggles with the restrictions of friendship. The artifices of Zanga are masterly, and at length determine Alonzo to confer with Don Carlos.

After his departure, the author has again furnished his Moor with some lines of a masterly nature ; boldly imagined, copiously arranged, and emphatically expressed. Don Carlos comes in upon his meditation, wrapped up in thought likewise. Don Carlos moralizes, in soliloquy, with judgment and feeling ; his sentiments, respecting hope and human happiness, are founded in philosophical truth.

The Moor, warmly intent upon his evil purposes, presses the melancholly lover to a resignation of his mistress, in favour of Alonzo ; the voluntary sacrifice of his dearest wishes, though in despair of their ever being fulfilled, pains him so much that he cannot comply ; therefore, requests Zanga to prevent an interview with his friend. This the Moor promises,

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mises, yet goes off with a determination to bring it about.

Carlos again ruminates upon the instability of temporal enjoyments ; his remark on the power of beauty is just and pleasing. As he is going off, Zanga brings on Alonzo---Here a very delicate and pathetic scene ensues, wherein the friends manifest a cordial feeling for each other. Alonzo's diffidence works the desired effect upon Carlos ; who, at length, triumphs over the agony of his mind so far, as not only to resign Leonora, but even to request his friend's acceptance of that happiness which he has been disappointed of.

The general's mind is so affected with this behaviour, that he retires, and Carlos concludes the act with a very descriptive assimilation of his own case to that of Epaminondas, who lived with an arrow in his side till victory was proclaimed, and then drawing forth the mortal shaft expired.

The third act commences with Zanga, in a state of malevolent rejoicing, that his designs are in so fair a train : by what he says to Isabella, we find Alonzo's nuptials have been compleated, and that a letter, forged by him, as from Carlos to Leonora, had fallen into the bridegroom's hands, on whom it had wrought a very powerful effect. Zanga's description of Alonzo, upon perusal of the infamous scroll, is masterly painting.

When the general enters, teeming with jealous doubts, the Moor pretends to go off, that he may be called upon. After much preparation, which Zanga receives with artful surprize ; Alonzo communicates the letter : here the Moor's hypocritical attachment is exhibited in strong colours ; to give the

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the forgery fresh force, he shews the utmost concern for its contents ; then, under a friendly pretext, tears the paper. What follows in this scene, shews Alonzo to be of an open, unsuspecting nature ; an apt subject for imposition, and the Moor shrewdly villainous.

The traitor draws forth every collateral circumstance which may increase the taint of his master's mind ; after which, with fair faced tenderness, he sends off the unhappy, deluded husband, to reflect upon a subject which he knows the more it is thought of, the more pain it gives. After putting a picture of Carlos into Isabella's hand, that she may place it in Leonora's chamber, to rise up a corroborative proof of infidelity, a gleam of remorse breaks in upon the traitorous gloom of Zanga's mind ; for a moment he feels compunction, and with great dignity of sentiment, reflects upon the disgraceful state of mental depravation his antipathy has led him to ; however, his darling principle of revenge suppresses every idea of remorse, and even renders infamy meritorious. This is one base effect of violent prejudices, which seldom fail to beautify the most culpable and horrid purposes.

At the beginning of the fourth act, we meet Alonzo labouring with increased perplexity ; he proposes going to his wife, and by terrifying threats, to force the secret from her. This step, so very dangerous to his hopes and views, the Moor artfully evades, by taking upon himself, with much seeming reluctance, the task of explaining matters. Just as he commences his artful tale, the author has introduced Leonora, without, in our apprehension, any purpose ; therefore, the omission of her short, insignificant

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insignificant scene, in action is judiciously left out. The lady being dispatched, Zanga gives a formal account of what, in a garden by moonlight, he had seen pass between her and Carlos. The picture wears such striking features of criminality, that Alonzo is even overwhelmed with conviction. When the confirmation of his wife's guilt is invincibly impressed upon Alonzo's mind, she is again introduced, and reproves him for avoiding his friends.

By a disjointed, unintelligible mode of behaviour, he alarms her feelings, and she goes off, filled with very painful sensibility. Zanga returns, and hearing his master talk of death, gives him joy of having sacrificed Leonora to his just jealousy. Being informed that she still lives, he sets at work every engine of insinuation and dissimulation to affect her destruction; this point, at length, he gets determined, and even obtains Alonzo's commission to get Carlos murdered. This act ends with a fanciful, but bombast speech.

At the beginning of the fifth act, we encounter the general, haunted with the imaginary ghost of his murdered friend. Zanga comes on, and tells him, that his orders respecting Carlos has been strictly fulfilled; this intelligence somewhat awakens remorse; however, having thus begun the work of blood, he determines to carry it on as far as his wife, and mentions the place he has appointed for this sacrifice to jealous rage. The Moor, viewing his mischievous plan in so thriving a situation, breathes out some masterly lines of emphatic exultation.

Leonora is next discovered sleeping in an arbour, the sight of her occasions a tenderness in Alonzo's mind, which he expresses in an agreeable manner, but too florid and picturesque for the state of agitation he is in. At length, he works his passion up to the fatal act, and even lifts his dagger to give the blow, but is stopped by her waking : love here interposes, and checks his rage, which extends no further than the utterance of some incoherent speeches ; she soothes him, and aims at explanation, but in vain.

Going off, he drops his dagger, at sight of such an object she is staggered, and, like a faithful wife, fears for her husband's safety ; however, when the bosom-snake Zanga hints to her, that her life stands endangered from Alonzo's jealousy, with the true spirit of conscious innocence, she determines to vindicate her own honour from so foul a charge ; and to free him from a feeling, which she can hardly suppose him mean enough to indulge.

Alonzo returning, Zanga urges afresh Leonora's guilt, but is sent off with a churlish reproof. When the lady re-enters, she is accosted by her husband in terms of very soft and tender respect : their converse, for some time, promises reunion, harmony and mutual satisfaction ; but, upon her producing the dagger, takes quite a different turn. He is thrown into fresh agitation by seeing the instrument of his jealousy, which Leonora perceiving, she expresses herself in such terms as warm him into a direct accusation of guilt : after some violent altercation, the pride of slander rises so high, that she stabs herself.

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This act of fatal extremity strikes Alonzo's affection deeply ; after apologizing for suicide in plausible terms, she is carried off, and Alonzo follows, possessed with the most horrid doubts. Zanga now comes forward, bent on filling up the measure of his revenge, by the most desperate means ; which, upon Alonzo's return, he puts in practice, by an open and triumphant declaration of his villainy ; this has the desired effect, and superadds such a weight of woe, that the unhappy victim of his implacable resentment, faints under the load. At length, having with great, though false dignity of sentiment, endeavoured to justify his cruel and treacherous proceedings, Zanga attempts to kill himself, but is prevented by Alonzo, and delivered as a prisoner to guards, who enter with Alvarez.

Upon hearing that Leonora is dead, the general puts a period to his own wretched existence ; this strikes the Moor with remorse, which he utters in very generous and forceable terms. When Zanga is carried to the fate his crimes deserve, Alvarez concludes the piece, with some rhimes which we cannot greatly approve.

The REVENGE, upon a general view, exhibits indisputable marks of a powerful genius : the versification is flowing and nervous ; the sentiments noble and comprehensive ; the moral, a warning against that hydra of calamities, jealousy. Yet, if we scrutinize, we shall find a barrenness of incident, a palling sameness in the scenes, and a wearisome length of laboured dialogue. There is also a most disadvantageous and palpable similitude to OTHELLO.

The characters are few, and of them only four deserve any notice. Alonzo is introduced to our regard as a brave and successful foldier ; yet, upon examination, we must consider him as a weak or a wicked personage : the former undoubtedly he is, and he borders close upon the latter, by first supplanting his friend in the business of love, and then authorizing his murder ; though, as a jealous Spaniard, with whom, as well as the Moors, revenge is virtue, he stands excusable.

In representation, he requires extensive and variable powers ; there are very difficult transitions in many passages, and he is a leading object for critical attention till his last scene, where he falls off most miserably.

Mr. RYAN was in voice and years, when we saw him, very unfit for the love scenes of this character ; yet, in the jealousy and distraction, he struck out considerable beauties. Mr. HAVARD looked the part better, and was more characteristic in the tender scenes. Mr. REDDISH, though deficient in powers for the most impassioned speeches, has, we apprehend, more equality of merit, and is, upon the whole, more agreeable than his predecessors. Had Mr. GARRICK ever condescended to represent the Spanish general, he would, beyond doubt, have made him one of the greatest parts on the stage ; whereas, wanting such incomparable abilities, he ever has been but a kind of foil to Zanga.

Carlos, though a very poetical character, is sadly insipid ; Mr. Ross did him more justice than any other person we recollect. It was barbarous in the managers to load Mr. J. AICKIN with this part. In a proper stile, we entertain a very favourable

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idea of this gentleman's sensibility ; but, we are sorry to say, that his Don Carlos was a most somniferous exhibition : why might not the sweet swain, Mr. CAUTHERLY, whine through this unseasoned lover ? though, to confess truth, the matter would in that case be very little mended.

Zanga is a finished villain, with some greatness of mind : we do not know any character more favourable to the actor ; this is plainly evinced by considering that in a great variety of performers we have seen undertake it, every one has met and deserved considerable applause. Mr. QUIN, in the soliloquies, and last scene, acquitted himself with great ability, but wanted ease of insinuation, and was heavy in the other parts. Mr. SHERIDAN, with powers vastly inferior, was more in character upon the whole. Mr. HOLLAND was better than either, by mingling the merit of both, yet fell greatly short of Mr. MOSSOP, who most certainly stands in this part himself alone ; as possessing and happily adapting an unequalled spirit, extent and propriety of expression.

Leonora has been rendered very agreeable by Mrs. BELLAMY, but we are inclined to prefer Mrs. BADDELY.

Auditors and readers, of florid conceptions, will be entertained with this play, both on the stage and in the closet ; however, we are inclined rather to praise it as a poem than a tragedy.

The

The SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

A COMEDY: By HOADLEY.]

RANGER, a young and volatile templar, opens this piece, just returned from the tavern, after a whole night's debauch; he reflects with sensible pleasantry upon tavern enjoyments: it is something odd, that having from CONGREVE sketched out such a female as suits his inclination, he should say, "Oh that I had such a soft, bewitching fair, to *lull my senses to their desired sleep*;" falling asleep is a bad compliment to a lady. After receiving some complimentary cards, he is encountered by a milliner, with whom he makes very free; however, his amorous parly is interrupted by the abrupt entrance of Mr. Bellamy, who, perceiving what Ranger had been about, gives him a friendly rebuke for putting modesty to the blush.

When Frankly comes on, a most indelicate idea is raised by his remark upon Ranger's looking sadly; we wish his question and the answer totally expunged. The remaining part of this scene is filled up with very agreeable conversation, upon the subject of gallantry and the fair sex; by which each discovers the bent of his own mind, with respect to the ladies. The visit is a mere chit-chat one, and seems to have no other meaning than opening the characters.

In

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In the following scene, we meet Mrs. Strickland and Jacintha, by whom we are made acquainted with Clarinda; and that Cupid's arrow has touched her heart, in favour of a young fellow she danced with at Bath. We also receive a hint of Mr. Strickland's gloomy state of mind. When that gentleman makes his appearance, we find, that as guardian to Jacintha, he has received a letter from Bellamy, soliciting his consent to marry that lady; upon which subject he makes some churlish remarks, but at last consents to see the lover.

After Jacintha goes off, Strickland opens at large his suspicious temper, by expressing dislike to Clarinda, as a companion for his wife. His expressions are full of ill nature and asperity, insomuch, that the lady burst into tears, which soften him into a faint, awkward kind of an apology, with which he retires, leaving Mrs. Strickland in doubt of his motives for such behaviour, and surprize at the foundation of them.

We are now carried into the Park, where Frankly and Bellamy present themselves, the former disclosing to his friend the passion he has conceived for an unknown lady; his account of the matter is pleasant and spirited. When Jack Meggot comes on, the subject gives way to his frothy, rhapsodical prattle: which, with very little meaning, is tolerably pleasant.

After the butterfly of fashion runs in pursuit of one of his favourite dilettanti, Frankly gives a favourable idea of his heart, though we cannot entertain any respect for his head. Our author has in the following passage, we apprehend, been guilty of unpardonable disrespect to the fair sex---“ There is
a heart

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a heart, *even* in a woman's breast, that is worth the purchase," why the emphatic word *even*, as if worth and generous feelings were more rare to be met with in the female, than the male sex. A most illiberal, as well as false idea.

The first act ends with Frankly's determining to search out, if possible, his fair incognita. At the beginning of the second, three ladies present themselves, Clarinda, Jacintha and Mrs. Strickland; the former being taxed with her Bath partner, she throws out some sprightly observations upon gallants, and the manner of treating them. Jacintha's prudent and settled notions of love are well opposed to Clarinda's levity; she having met with a worthy and agreeable man, has given him unrestrained possession of her heart. Mrs. Strickland's unhappy situation being mentioned, the gay lady recommends resistive behaviour, which the sensible wife declines. To remove Strickland's uneasy apprehensions, Clarinda goes off, with a resolution of leaving his house.

After two or three speeches, she returns in a great flurry of spirits, having met her admirer; the trick of letting him know where she lives is natural: a kind of pantomime pursuit ensues, till, at length, Frankly having housed her, takes the advantage of an open door, and obtains a short conference with her, in which he speaks plainly as to the passion he has conceived for her.

Her diffidence is delicate, and the lover makes no further progress than receiving information, that he will find or hear of her at Mr. Strickland's house. After he goes off, Clarinda makes an open confession to Mrs. Strickland of her captivated state.

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state. Mr. Strickland, in soliloquy, expresses much uneasiness at the visitors and messages which come to Clarinda, as supposing his wife may have some sinister concern in them. Seeing Lucetta, his wife's waiting-woman, he determines to examine her; but thinking she may deceive him, calls for Tester, whose simplicity he thinks may be more safely trusted than the chambermaid's cunning; however, upon consideration, he deems him too weak and fallible an object for confidence to rest upon, therefore again calls for Lucetta, to whom he addresses himself with such whimsical caution, that she very artfully pretends to apprehend an attack upon her virtue; this, and her laughing at his perplexity, increases it so much, that he hurries her off; and makes a very forceable remark on the tormenting situation of his own mind, so painfully enslaved by suspicion.

From Bellamy and Jack Meggot, in the next scene, we learn, that if Jacintha, who has determined to elope, effects her purpose, she is to be lodged at Jack's house. Frankly enters to them, on the wings of transport, at having found his Perdita; of whom, however, he can give no further account, than that he has seen and obtained leave to visit her again.

When Jack Meggot retires, Bellamy acknowledges himself in the list of lovers: pleased with their sympathetic feelings, Frankly and he embrace, a circumstance merely introduced for Ranger to jest upon their insipid situation. His entrance rather interrupts their amorous ideas, as deeming him a heretic in love affairs; however, he delivers a letter from Jacintha to Bellamy, which informs the

audience that she has planned her elopement. Ranger's advice of carrying her to a bagnio, however smart, is rather gross.

When Bellamy claims Ranger's assistance, he calls himself a *damnable* unlucky fellow, we wish he had found another epithet, for though it may be natural enough in a Covent Garden buck, it is reprehensible on the stage. Buckle, Bellamy's servant, informs his master that Jacintha, having no other means of escape, intends to descend from her chamber-window by a ladder of ropes, and that she is to be disguised in boy's cloaths: matters thus settled, the second act concludes.

Bellamy, disguised in a chairman's coat, begins the third act, before Strictland's house, to which spot also love has conveyed Frankly. Lucetta, from below, informs Jacintha at the window, that she must be very cautious, as her guardian is up and on the watch. Frankly, from what he imperfectly hears and sees, imagines that some intrigue is going forward, therefore resolves to listen. While he is closely attending Jacintha's motions, Clarinda enters, returning from a whist party, and overhears some conversation between them. Jacintha, supposing it is Bellamy, throws down the rope ladder; just as she is going to descend, Lucetta informs her that she may come down the back stairs; this change of situations gives Clarinda an opportunity of detecting, as she supposes, her faithless spark. He endeavours to exculpate himself, but she flounces into the house without affording him an idea of forgiveness.

Here Bellamy enters, and seeing a man under his mistress's window, entertains jealous apprehensions
of

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of rivalship. Jacintha, in the hurry of her escape, runs into Frankly's arms---How he immediately discovers her to be a woman is not obvious. Belamy's alarm increases, and he gives the supposed rival an oblique challenge. No sooner are these characters off the stage, than Strickland appears, in pursuit of his ward. To him succeeds Ranger, who having more liquor than prudence in his head, seems eager to have what he calls a frolic.

Reeling along, he encounters the rope ladder, and in the flow of spirits determines to mount it. Upon reaching the window, he spies an agreeable woman, and very modestly resolves to follow, determining to make an amorous attack upon her. Mrs. Strickland and Lucetta next appear; from some words which the maid drops, Ranger discovers that the lady's husband is jealous, and from that circumstance draws favourable hopes respecting his own design upon her; when Lucetta, for delivering her sentiments rather too freely, is ordered to quit the room, our gallant templar presents himself, in a manner not very delicate. His purpose thro' the whole scene is culpably licentious, and the lady's behaviour, as we think, much too tame for such an unpardonable intrusion.

Strickland's approach occasions Ranger to retreat precipitately; in his hurry he inadvertently drops his hat; it appears, that Strickland has recovered Jacintha, and she is brought on as his prisoner.

Having sharply reproved the young lady for her adventurous elopement, Strickland strikes his foot against Ranger's hat, which, in his hurry, that gallant had dropped. Such an object found in a wife's dressing room, might naturally alarm a man

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less tainted with suspicion. Mrs. Strickland, bold in her own innocence, though with such an unfavourable circumstance against her, endeavours, with becoming spirit, to set her precipitate lord and master right; who cannot, however, be reduced to any degree of reason, till wrought upon by a finesse which Lucetta suggests, that of Jacintha's owning the hat.

This turn is pleasant enough, and works the desired effect. A reconciliation, at least an awkward, temporary one, takes place between the married couple; but the disappointed single lady is sent close prisoner to her chamber, with a declaration from her guardian, that in the morning she must be removed to the country.

The scene being changed, Ranger comes forward, groping his way in a dark chamber, bent upon seeking out game: Jacintha enters with a candle, whom, from appearance, he takes to be a boy; however, by some expressions she drops in soliloquy, he discovers his mistake, and as she is going to attempt a second escape, by means of the ladder of ropes, which she supposes is still at the window, he presents himself: with humorous freedom he pays his devoirs in such pressing terms, that, being afraid, on Mrs. Strickland's account, to cry out, she is at length obliged to mention Bellamy's name; this strikes Ranger, who plays her off agreeably, concerning her letter, which mentioned the plan of elopement.

Perceiving hereby that Ranger is in her lover's confidence, she readily agrees to his proposal of helping her from confinement, and conducting her to the man of her heart.

Act

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Act the fourth begins with Bellamy and Frankly, the former rating the latter, as being, though without design, the occasion of his losing Jacintha. While he is in this critical state of temper, Lucetta comes in great confusion to enquire for Jacintha; he knowing nothing about her, the maid remarks, that Clarinda supposes her to be gone off with one Frankly. On this information Bellamy sends Lucetta to search for the lost fair one, and seeing a confusion in Frankly's face, which might very naturally arise in such a case, he draws, demanding what is called gentleman's satisfaction for the supposed injury.

Here Ranger opportunely enters, and ludicrously remarks, that they manifest a strange contrariety of behaviour---One moment hugging each other, and the next tilting. In the account he gives of his last night's adventure, some very pleasant misapprehensions arise, which bring on the alternate resentment of Bellamy and Frankly, against their merry friend; who designedly plays upon them the game of cross purposes, till he is both threatened and wheedled to give an explanation that may ease their anxiety.

This, however, he refers to Jack Meggot, which the sprightly prattle enters upon immediately, by informing them that Jacintha is at his house. This eases Bellamy's painful feelings, and Frankly's new raised jealousy subsides by being told, that the other lady Ranger had encountered is a wife. Each having mentioned a particular destination, the four gentlemen go off to make way for Mrs. Strickland and Clarinda.

The

The latter, we perceive, is preparing for a speedy removal from Mr. Strickland's house : he appears, and receives ironical, cold thanks, for the civilities she has received from him. Having conducted her off, he re-enters, expresses satisfaction at her departure, and then leads his wife off also.

Lucetta being left alone, states to herself the suspicious situation of affairs, and seems, from the hat, to think her mistress guilty. While she is thus meditating, Frankly comes, desiring to speak with Clarinda ; being informed that she has left the house, with warm persuasion, and a golden bribe, she promises to deliver a letter to her.

Strickland, alarmed by hearing a knock at the door, and a man's voice, listens. When Frankly goes off, he steals behind Lucetta, and snatches the epistle out of her hand ; reads it, and finding an apology for an unseasonable visit, he concludes it to be from the owner of the hat to his wife ; from mention of a companion at Bath, he supposes Clarinda to be an accessary. His jealous ideas thus confirmed, he storms at Lucetta, who desires him to look at the cover of the letter, a point his impatience had neglected.

By this he finds that it is directed to Clarinda : the maid, justly reproving his folly, he concludes that they are all confederates, that his wife is indisputably guilty, and that in consequence thereof, a positive separation must take place.

Clarinda next appears, crossing the stage in a chair, and goes into a lodging house : Ranger pursues her, and, by bribing the chairman, gains free access. The lady discovers who he is, and asks for a mask, under which she resolves to try her mad-cap cousin.

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Upon his approach, he supposes her to be a lady of easy virtue, and as such, though with delicacy, makes his attack in very flattering terms, till being wrought up to a particular degree of rapture, she discloses her face, and throws him into a laughable confusion; however, he turns it off with agreeable address, professing a knowledge of her, though disguised.

In their conversation Jacintha is mentioned, and Clarinda speaks of the hat dropped in Mrs. Strictland's chamber; this leads to a discovery which Ranger avails himself of, that his cousin is Frankly's mistress. After receiving from her a kind of catechetical admonition, by way of retaliation, he alarms her with a fictitious incident of Frankly's being wounded.

Here, by shewing palpable concern for her lover, she convinces Ranger of her regard, and he teizes her pretty handsomely; however, she at last gets rid of him, and then determines upon enquiring further into the truth of so interesting a circumstance.

At the beginning of the fifth act, we see Strictland at one end of a table writing, and his wife at the other end weeping; the purport of his letter is to acquaint Mrs. Strictland's brother in the country what a sister he is like to receive; the thoughts of being so criminated affect her deeply. Hearing two soft taps at the door, her suspicious husband starts, and thinks to make some discovery against her: upon opening the door, he sees Tester, and enraged at his disappointment, strikes the undesigning simpleton, who, by way of vindication, declares, that his mistress had ordered him never to come in without knocking; this is considered as a fresh corroboration

ration of guilt. Upon reading a letter from Bellamy and his bride Jacintha, he determines upon going to Jack Meggot's, where an eclclaircissement is promised, though he supposes all the parties combined to deceive him.

Soon after he goes off, Lucetta comes on, and acquaints Mrs. Strickland, that Mrs. Bellamy desires her appearance also at Mr. Meggot's, particularly as the young gentleman, Ranger, who was so unexpectedly in her room the night before, is to be at the general rendezvous. We next meet Frankly, Ranger, Bellamy and Jacintha; the former being informed that Clarinda is not only a lady of fortune and Ranger's cousin, but that she loves him, expresses warm satisfaction. In a short time the lady appears; not seeing Frankly, her fears of his being wounded increase; a concern which she cannot hide is pleasantly rallied by the other characters: at length the men retire.

When the women are alone, Jacintha, with much formality of countenance and phrase, plays upon her friend's feelings, but immediately relieves them, by declaring, that her gallant has no wounds but those of love; she then calls Mr. Frankly from his concealment, and leaves the enamoured pair to an explanation of their own concerns.

In a short *tete-a-tete*, the lover makes close approaches, while the lady shews a delicate, but not an unkind resistance. When they are both puzzled what to say, Ranger appears, and laughingly points out the awkwardness of speechless love: he then comes to the decisive point of settling matters; at once asks his cousin if she has not given consent to make her lover happy, which question not being answered

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answered satisfactorily, he mentions the letter Mr. Strickland had intercepted, and goes off to bring proof of what he asserts.

When he is gone, Frankly confesses having given such a letter to Lucetta : matters now take a very tender turn, when they are again interrupted by the entrance of Ranger, Strickland, Bellamy, Jacintha, and Jack Meggot. Mr. Strickland being promised satisfaction in the affair of the letter, seems disposed to entertain a more favourable turn of mind. Clarinda, being persuaded that Mrs. Strickland's future happiness, in a great measure, depends on her agreeing to Frankly's solicitations, acquiesces. Strickland seeing her with the very person whose letter he had stopped, seems to apprehend his folly ; and, upon Frankly's openly declaring the matter, confesses his error.

Ranger here takes a pleasant advantage of the state of things to hasten Clarinda's marriage, by telling Strickland not to trust their declaration, unless confirmed by a positive match ; this being insisted on, the point is settled agreeably to all parties. Seeing Mrs. Strickland approach, Ranger, conscious of his own censurable indiscretion, takes alarm : the injured wife, perceiving her occasional gallant, points him out to Strickland, as the person who was in her chamber the night before ; to prevent serious resentment he recapitulates his adventure, and in the relation gives Strickland a severe reproof for his jealousy.

Finding conviction flash upon him from all sides, the reformed husband encounters his jealousy, and is reconciled to his wife with tears of joy. All matters being thus agreeably disposed, Ranger con-

cludes the piece with a sensible compliment to matrimony, when attended with sense and virtue.

No play has appeared with greater eclat for many years than the *SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND* did at its first appearance, nor is any comedy more likely to live from an uncommon vivacity of dialogue, variety and pleasantry of incidents. There are some improbabilities in the plot, which occur in the third act, but they are rather pleasing than offensive, and the design is entertaining, though trifling.

Wit there is none and very little sentiment, yet nature need not be ashamed of our author's delineation, who has neither heightened her charms, nor caricatured her defects.

The denouement is most satisfactorily wrought up; the circumstances are spiritedly and convictively explained; as to the characters, let them speak for themselves.

Strickland, who is confessedly drawn from *JOHNSON'S Kiteley*, wants much of that nervous beauty which appears in the original, yet is not without merit; his jealousy is well described, and his situations properly imagined; his reformation is brought about by very powerful persuasive; and, at the catastrophe, we have great reason to believe he is cured of his folly.

To perform this part requires judgment and expression; it has never been better done than by *MR. BRIDGEWATER*. *MR. SPARKS*, notwithstanding we only place him second, bustled through the jealousy very well; his fault was aiming at more than is necessary. *MR. BERRY*, and the present possessor, *MR. LOVE*, got to the other extreme, a most drowsing insipidity.

Ranger

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Ranger is a very pleasant and plausible rake, who commits many culpable actions, but without any fundamental, ill design; his clambering into a gentleman's house at midnight, is a very indiscreet joke; but to ballance his foibles, he seems to have friendship, generosity and honour, at the bottom.

Mr. GARRICK was his faithful, excellent representative; the volatile humour of the inconsiderate templar, was admirably described by this most metamorphosable actor; insomuch, that we well remember several young fellows, who, having more spirit than sense, attempted to imitate his Ranger in real life, for which both their bones and pockets suffered smartly.

Doctor HOADLY's jokes would not do retailed in such a manner; we laugh at transactions upon the stage, which would be very displeasing at home. Mr. LEE had undoubted merit in Ranger, but wanted that voluble spirit which places Mr. KING, in our opinion, next to Mr. GARRICK, and not far behind him. Mr. DYER has made several inadequate efforts, but for a London theatre has always appeared more like the sketch of a character than a real one. Would you, kind reader, believe so gross an improbability, as that Mr. SHERIDAN, not having the fear of murder before his eyes, should, with more than savage barbarity, mutilate poor Ranger? yet, true it is: upon this occasion, as well as many others, we were induced to wish, that, *as an actor*, he had studied that excellent admonition, KNOW THYSELF; a maxim quite as essential to public as private life, yet as little attended to in the former as the latter.

Frankly is a gay young fellow, susceptible of the tender passions; though he cannot obtain such ap-

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plause and attention as Ranger, he is nevertheless more respectable as a man ; he loves one object, and pursues her only. His situations, though not very critical, are yet well disposed ; and though he can never add much to a performer's reputation, yet, if there are adequate abilities, he wont injure them.

Mr. RYAN was the first representative we recollect of this character, and had a considerable share of sprightly ease ; but age and figure were both against him. Mr. HAVARD was genteel, but wanted life. Mr. PALMER had sufficient spirit, but was rather coxcomical. As to Mr. JEFFERSON, we think the part above his cut.

Bellamy is a sober, regular gallant ; and we think he is just as well supported by Mr. PACKER, as by any body else. Jack Meggot was most happy with Mr. WOODWARD ; and has no manner of reason to complain of Mr. DODD. Mr. VAUGHAN's simple Tester cannot be mended.

Mrs. Strickland is an agreeable picture of what a wife should be, only we think her patience and condescension are carried rather too far : there is a commendable degree of pliancy in domestic disputes, which often prevents extremities ; but, in this character, there is a censurable tameness.

Mrs. ELMY, who had a peculiar grace and happiness in making characters conspicuous, which scarce any other actress could gain attention to, supported the task of playing this part, for such it really is, with pleasing ability. Mrs. PALMER, though not equal to her predecessor, was extremely amiable in this gentle wife ; and we are not at all displeased to find her in possession of Mrs. W. BARRY.

Clarinda

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Clarinda we may perceive to be an object of the author's particular regard; she is furnished with a large fund of spirits, and a slight dash of the coquette; yet capable of a settled, sincere passion, without any tendency to imprudent actions. She likes to rally, and has a pleasant flow of expression, but never sacrifices delicacy at the shrine of licentious wit.

Mrs. WOFFINGTON was pleasant in Clarinda, but stiffened her too much with the affectation, both in deportment and delivery, of a fine lady. Mrs. PRITCHARD, by equalling her excellence, and avoiding her faults, took the lead considerably; there was a freedom and fire of expression in her performance, that we have never seen surpassed. Miss HAUGHTON was by no means unentertaining, yet far below either of these ladies; and Miss POPE, at present in a state of comparison, makes but a very moderate shift.

Jacintha, in the circumstance of her elopement, shews more of a romantic, adventurous disposition, than prudence; however, she has ardent love on one side, and confinement on the other, to plead her excuse; and the most rigid observer must be pleased that she effects her escape. When Mrs. WILLOUGHBY played this part, some years since, she gave us great pleasure, though an actress little known, and by few now remembered; by giving her the preference, we don't mean to deprive Mrs. JEFFERIES of the praise she deserves.

Lucetta is a short, unimportant chambermaid, yet well drawn, and useful to the play; Mrs. GREEN made every line of her tell; but, for Mrs. LOVE---oh! oh! oh!

We

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We are sorry, after a serious, candid enquiry, into the nature and tendency of this play, to condemn so agreeable a piece of entertainment. It is most certainly calculated to exhilarate, but will it mend the heart? we fear not. Will it rest neuter, and leave the susceptible mind no worse than it finds it? we are apprehensive, no. Ranger is certainly a gilded bait of vice, for youth, and vanity to snap at; and all his transactions tend at least to inflame, if not to taint the imagination. On the stage it is full of vivacity and laughter; in the closet slimy and uninstruative.



King

King H E N R Y the Fifth.

An Historical TRAGEDY: SHAKESPEARE.

WE have some where observed, in respect of our author, that he not only successfully availed himself of historical subjects in general, but, with peculiar address, turned to advantage, many remarkable characters and transactions of his own country; which from a very natural and commendable partiality to our native soil, prove particularly interesting to British audiences.

The poet's idea of that unexpectedly great monarch the fifth Henry, may be collected from his prologue to this play; which, not only for the essential connection, but its sublimity, should always be spoken; it is a noble apology for the gross trespasses upon time and place, which so often occur to shock nice and rigid criticism.

Ely and the Archbishop of Canterbury open this play, like true churchmen who love to hold fast temporalities, they consult how to ward off a parliamentary attack upon a considerable part of their possessions; they seem happy in having the king of their side, of whose reformation, from the disgraceful follies of his youth, they give a very favourable account; the royal favour seems to have been purchased by a politic proposal of Canterbury's, to furnish the king with a larger voluntary contribution than ever had been given by the clergy, to his predecessors.

In

In the second scene we meet King Henry, surrounded by several noblemen; upon the Archbishop's entrance, his majesty asks his opinion, relative to the salique law of France; whether it should or should not affect the English claims upon that kingdom; this proposition Canterbury answers with nice political distinctions, and decides in favour of England.

How the author could suppose any actor could gain attention through so long, laborious and intricate a speech, we know not: the prelate strongly urging war, is backed by the other nobles, when Henry takes occasion to utter his apprehension that the Scots may take a dangerous advantage of foreign hostilities; this point is overruled by his counsellors, upon which the king orders the ambassador of France to be called in.

During his audience, we perceive the Frenchman to be very pert, particularly in his mention of the ton of tennis balls, sent by the Dauphin as an ironical equivalent for the territories claimed by England; the monarch's reply is pregnant with truly royal spirit, and becomingly denounces the chastisement of France for such presumptuous insolence; the Ambassador being dismissed, Henry urges speedy, vigorous preparation for the expedition; declaring that he will return the Dauphin's compliment at his father's door.

In the succeeding scene, we find a strange transition of characters; from the highest rank in life, we are immediately popped amidst the scum of the earth, Nim and Bardolph; we find, that the former has had some quarrel with Ancient Pistol, which the latter wants to make up between them.

They

Henry the Fifth.

They are soon joined by the swaggering blade and Hostess Quickly; the quarrel is renewed, and a conversation in the flash stile ensues.

It is painful to think that such low, unintelligible jargon, should have been obtruded upon a serious piece. The Hostess gives them an intimation, that their old leader, Sir John Falstaff, is at the point of death, and desires them to visit him.

At the beginning of the second act we meet a chorus, which never should be omitted; the tale of connexion is fine, and expressed with nervous elegance. Exeter, Bedford and Westmoreland, come forward, mentioning some traitors who have been discovered. The king, upon his entrance, addresses himself to the culprits, in very gentle terms, desiring their opinion concerning the expedition: from this he leads them on to warm professions of loyalty; at length, giving each a paper, they perceive their detection, and cannot conceal their confusion; but instantaneously acknowledge their guilt, and sue for mercy, which the king, upon their own principles, very justly refuses; for having some speeches before proposed pardoning a man, who, in heat of liquor, had spoken disrespectfully of his majesty, these conscious villains expressed disapprobation of such royal lenity.

After recapitulating in a masterly, but rather too minute a manner, their ingratitude and treachery, he delivers them over to the course of law, and, with great humanity, prays for their acquittal. They are formally arrested by Exeter, and behave with becoming contrition: they are borne to their fate, and Henry goes off with a spirited reso-

lution of seating himself on the throne of France, or falling in the bold attempt.

In the next scene we are placed amongst the ragamuffins, from whom we learn, that Falstaff is no more : the Hostess's description of his final exit is masterly ; and, we doubt not, all lovers of the fat knight, feel, at this passage, some regret for the loss of him. We are inclined to wish that all his followers, who could only be sufferable through their connexion with him, had tripped off the stage of life also ; but, as the author has chosen to retain them, we must compound for their company, however irksome ; especially as they follow the king to France.

The grand monarch and his son, the Dauphin, next appear, conferring with the Duke of Burgundy and Constable, concerning the English invasion. Henry's character is lightly treated by the volatile Dauphin, whose opinion is controverted by the peers ; and even the French king seems to think him formidable, as having sprung from that victorious stock which shook the power of France, at the memorable, fatal battle of Cressy. A messenger announcing the approach of ambassadors from England, they are admitted to an immediate audience.

Exeter, on the part of his royal master, plainly and directly urges a renunciation of the French crown, in favour of Henry, under claim of his illustrious ancestor, Edward the Third ; denouncing warlike compulsion in case of refusal. The Dauphin asking what reply the English monarch has sent to his message, receives threats of chastisement. The French king, though so roughly attacked, tamely promises

Henry the Fifth.

promises an answer on the following day ; and thus with the conference, ends the second act.

Here again we meet with a very essential, because explanatory and connective chorus ; after which King Henry appears before the gates of Harfleur, where he has begun hostilities ; the proposals from France not being equal to his vast ideas. His address to the assailants is truly heroic, and worthy a royal character, roused to vindictive measures. He leads them on to the assault with becoming dignity and resolution.

Here a scene follows, which is a strange and trifling intrusion upon the serious circumstances of affairs. Three captains, Scotch, Welsh and Irish, are introduced ; the two last enter into a dispute of some humour, though a very unseasonable one, concerning discipline. Hearing a parley founded, they go off, and Henry appears again before the gates ; declaring, that he will no longer be trifled with, by the governor of Harfleur ; but, on refusal of surrender, will sacrifice the town to his just resentment.

The governor, despairing of succour, yields, and the victorious monarch enters his new conquest.

Catherine, a French princess of France, is next introduced, endeavouring to learn some English words ; sure there never was a more trifling and superfluous scene written. The French king, with his son, and several nobles, are now brought forward, descanting on the English spirit. Touched with shame at the unchecked approaches of so daring a foe, the monarch gives orders for a sudden and vigorous opposition.

We next meet Gower, an officer, and the Welsh captain, Fluellin ; who remarks, that a person of little note, Ancient Pistol, has shewed himself a man

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of spirit: the Ancient immediately appears, and solicits the Welshman's interposition to save Bardolph, who has committed a robbery. The Cambro-briton disdains such an office, and declares, he would not, in such a case, seek favour for a brother. This irritates Pistol, who goes off in a violent huff.

Gower explains his character to Fluellin, who, it appears, had no proof of his bravery, but his own boasting. Upon this discovery, and his contemptuous words, the Welshman determines to watch an opportunity of putting him to the test. Here Henry enters, and is addressed by the captain, with some compliments upon the Duke of Exeter's martial abilities. Upon his mentioning Bardolph's situation, the king properly declares, that such persons are fit objects of punishment; and declares against all exercise of cruelty and rapine, though in an enemy's country.

Mountjoy, as ambassador from the French king, enters, and, in an address of considerable spirit, delivers his master's defiance. Henry mentions the distressed, sickly state of his army; yet, with an exalted resolution, declares his purpose to advance to Calais, and his determination, if opposed, to fight his way.

We do not approve the national reflections thrown out by the king in this scene; they are uncharacteristic, both as to his understanding and station; the sum total of this audience is, that he will neither seek nor shun a battle. It appears, that the English monarch is reduced to a very ticklish and perilous situation, which however no way appalls his mighty heart.

The

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The Dauphin, and peers of France, next exhibit themselves; between whom a most trifling conversation, upon the merit of horses, ensues. When the prince goes off, his character is freely and slightly handled by one of the lords. In the latter part of this scene, being informed that Henry is within fifteen hundred paces of the French camp, the sprightly and confident *monsieurs* divert themselves at the expence of the English, whom they seem to consider as an easy prey, and go off to prepare for certain victory.

Well met again, at the beginning of the fourth act, honest chorus. Some part of this address to the audience, as well as other passages in the play, CIBBER has transplanted into his *RICHARD THE THIRD*. A most pitiable picture is drawn of Henry's situation, yet the author has taken particular care to sustain the dignity of his character; this painting is very political, as his future, wonderful victory, is thereby thrown into a more conspicuous and advantageous light.

His description of the king is so masterly and amiable, that we cannot avoid presenting our readers with a part of it.

—forth he goes and visits all the host;
Bids them good-morrow with a modest smile,
And calls them brothers, friends and countrymen;
Upon his royal face there is no note
How dread an army has surrounded him;
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour,
Unto the weary and all-watch'd night:
But freshly looks, and overbears attaint
With chearful semblance and sweet majesty;
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.

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After this very favourable impression is struck by the chorus, Henry appears, remarking, with suitable composure, to Bedford and Gloucester, the danger they are in. Upon the entrance of an aged knight, Sir Thomas Erpingham, the king good naturedly observes, that the soft pillow of peace is more adapted to his enfeebled age, than war's flinty couch; however, the spirited baronet returns a brief and pithy answer.

Henry takes a short leave of them, as wishing to consult his own heart, previous to the impending conflict. When the peers have left him, the king, wrapped up in Sir Thomas Erpingham's cloak, is accosted by Pistol, who, in his pompous cant, pays Henry some compliments; but denounces heavy threats against Fluellin, which the king banters pleasantly.

After Pistol goes off, Gower and Fluellin meet; the latter, who greatly admires the Romans, descants warmly on military decorum, he contends hard for silence in a camp; and, upon being told that the French do not maintain any such reserve, but are loud, very sensibly observes, that their dissipated and irregular folly, is no just standard for soldiers, who regard reputation and success to go by.

Three soldiers, Bates, Court and Williams enter; the latter accosts King Henry, demanding whom he serves under; he is answered, Sir Thomas Erpingham. A very significant conference ensues, wherein the soldiers exhibit melancholy ideas of their situation; the king reasons with them, and throws their danger upon the necessity of invaded honour. Williams asserting, that a king who urges war,

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war, has the lives and limbs of his fellow-creatures to answer for, Henry enters into a very cool, candid and rational exculpation of royalty.

There is considerable instruction, especially for militarrians, to be collected from this speech: an observation that Williams makes, occasions the king to give a rebuke, which produces a challenge; Williams gives a glove, and Henry presents him another. When the soldiers disappear, his majesty ruminates upon what has passed, and justly considers the regal state, as a fountain of ever springing cares. Some lines he utters on this occasion, we must transcribe.

And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?
What kind of God art thou that suffereſt more
Of mortal grief than do thy worshippers?
What are thy rents, what are thy comings-in?
O ceremony, shew me but thy worth;
What is thy soul of adoration?
Art thou ought else but place, degree and form;
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein thou art less happy being fear'd,
Than they in fearing.
What drinks thou oft instead of homage sweet
But poison'd flattery? oh be sick, great greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure.

The whole of this speech is fine, but our fanciful author has run it to a length, beyond the power of any actor to support; it must, in some places, hang heavy on expression, though every line pleases in perusal.

Being informed that his nobles are impatient to see him, the king desires they may be summoned to
his

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his tent; and, after a very pious ejaculation, though rather relishing of the proud Samaritan, who confidently boasted of his own good works, he goes off to meet them. In the next scene we hear the Dauphin, and other French chiefs, proudly vaunting their superiority over the drooping English; they hasten to the field, confident of success, and leave the stage for Henry and his party. There is an Ironicism in this line of Westmorland's, *but ONE ten thousand of those men in England.*

The royal Briton, though conscious of the fearful odds against him, addresses his peers with heroic cheerfulness; and when Mountjoy comes with insolent proposal of a ransom, the gallant monarch declares they shall have none but his bones. After this scene the armies join in battle: while we are waiting and anxious for the great event, our author has unaccountably brought in a scene between Pistol and a Frenchman, he has taken prisoner; the whole of which is contemptibly farcical, and this passage very reprehensible, "Signieur DEWE should be a gentleman;" playing upon sacred terms, though by mistake, is no way allowable.

After this Bartholomew-fair dialogue, we learn from the Dauphin and Constable, that the victory has gone against France; however, they go off to make a final effort. Henry enters, when a pathetic account is given of York and Suffolk, who have fallen in the battle: hearing a fresh alarm, the English monarch gives an order, shocking to human nature, however justified by necessity; that is to kill all the prisoners.

While the decisive stroke of battle is giving, we are entertained with Fluellin's ludicrous assimilation of King Henry to Alexander; and when the monarch

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monarch comes on, the same humorous captain laughably mentions his being a Welshman. Williams, to whom Henry, in disguise, gave a glove, is brought on; being questioned why he wears that token of a challenge in his hat, he assigns the reason; being sent off for Gower, his captain, the king gives that glove he received from Williams to Fluellin, telling him, he took it from Alanfon in the battle, and that if any one challenges it, he must be a friend of Alanfon's; Fluellin receives it with particular satisfaction.

This seems a boyish, unmeaning circumstance, in the king's conduct, to put two men in the path of quarrel; and the moment he has done so, dispatches two of his nobles to prevent any serious consequence. SHAKESPEARE has in this sacrificed the dignity of his hero to a desire of enriching Fluellin's character; and shewing Henry's liberality, by filling the glove with crowns for Williams.

After this frivolous, unessential point is settled, a herald recapitulates the loss of the French, which appears to be prodigious! especially when compared to that of the English. The king, as a man of sound sense and religion, most justly attributes the miraculous difference, to providential influence in his favour. The fourth act closes with Henry's order to embark for England.

At the beginning of the fifth act, we again meet our friendly chorus, who gives many subjects for imagination to work upon; without which the piece really makes a very disjointed and irreconcilable figure. The choleric Welshman is presented to us with a leek in his hat; which, according to

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his own account, he wears for sake of Ancient Pistol, who had slightly mentioned that national ornament : opportunely his antagonist appears, to whom he gives terms of provocation, which the Ancient replies to by a fresh insult upon leeks ; this occasions Fluellin to insist upon Pistol's eating that he has in his hat. So severe a task is contemptuously declined at first, but a few stripes cause the boasting poltroon to comply, which however he does with high sounding praise.

The kings of England and France are next brought to a friendly interview, which turns upon the subject of a pacific alliance, planned and urged by the Duke of Burgundy : Henry observes, that the terms are before his Gallic majesty, and that on his answer peace depends. The French monarch desires time to reconsider matters, which is allowed, and five English nobles are authorized to settle matters with him.

All the other characters being gone, a very insipid, awkward scene of courtship ensues, between Henry and Catherine, a princess of France ; words are played upon in a most childish manner : we see no reason why Catherine should be the only person in the French court who does not speak English ; and that Henry, though the French language was not in his time so fashionable as at present, should be ignorant of it when he claimed France as his natural, lawful inheritance. Had these absurdities in character served any striking purpose, there would have been some degree of palliation ; but the whole purport of four insignificant, word-catching pages,

is

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is to acquaint us with the monarch's desire to make Catherine his queen.

After this interview, the French king comes on, and all articles being agreed upon, particularly the proposed marriage, the play concludes. We see no reason for introducing the last chorus, as it is nothing but a piece of unnecessary, historical information.

The principal event of this tragedy, renders the subject dear to every English mind, else we cannot find so many shining proofs of SHAKESPEARE's genius in HENRY the FIFTH, as in many of his plays: incidents are sadly crowded, and the last act is lamentably languid; the comic parts are a most unnatural connexion, and notwithstanding we allow Fluellin to be well drawn, most contemptible; there is very little to strike in action, and as little to pleasure in perusal.

The English monarch is drawn a most excellent picture of what a king should be, wise, cool, politic, liberal, merciful and brave; fond of fame, but not in an unjust cause. We have seen Mr. SHERIDAN display solidity of judgment in this part, though royalty was much injured by his external appearance, and harmony of expression violently wounded by the discord of his voice. The justification of a king, in case of waging war, he delivered better than any other person we have seen.

Mr. SMITH is, upon the whole, more pleasing, yet wants consequence and variety.

Mr. BARRY, in this part, steps far beyond any degree of competition, within our knowledge; his figure and manner happily unite to fill up our idea of the fifth Henry.

The other serious characters of this piece are too immaterial for recollection; however, we can venture to say, that we have seen Exeter and the Constable of France, well supported by Messrs. CLARKE and HULL; nor have we any fault to find with Mr. GARDNER, in the Archbishop of Canterbury. Flu-ellin is a part of great oddity, and requires peculiar acting; we are inclined to think Mr. MACKLIN much more characteristic in this part than Mr. SHUTER.

Mr. THE. CIBBER made more of the popgun Ancient Pistol than possibly ever will be seen again, by a laughable importance of deportment, extravagant grimaces, and speaking it in the sonorous cant of old tragedizers, he exhibited a very entertaining piece of acting merit. Mr. DYER is nobody.

Mrs. PITT's Hostess is worth notice, though short of Mrs. MACKLIN, whose description of Falstaff's dying was inimitable.

AARON HILL, favoured the town with a piece on the subject of this play, in which he preserved much more dramatic regularity, and approached nearer the tender passions, but has rather eclipsed the blaze of genius. With all its irregularities, SHAKESPERAE's must take the lead considerably, as indeed he always will in a state of comparison; for even his weakest, and most censurable efforts, have in them an affluent originality, beyond the reach of any other dramatic author.

THE BUSY BODY.

A COMEDY: By Mrs. CENTLIVRE.

SIR George Airy meets Charles in the Park; the former appears to be a little uneasy in his mind, which the latter rallies him for pleasantly; insinuating, that a man possessed of omnipotent gold, may obtain any thing to lull unquiet feelings. Being told that the cause is love, he seems to think Plutus a more powerful deity than Cupid, and that the blind God must yield to the God of Wealth.

It appears, that Sir George's passion is engaged by two ladies, one whose face he has never seen, but is charmed by her wit; the other he has seen, and is captivated by her beauty, without having ever exchanged a word with her; Miranda, who is the ward of Charles's father, claims a preference. Sir Francis Gripe's avaritious character is opened, and his intention of marrying the young lady himself, for the sake of her fortune, disclosed to the baronet, who gains a promise of assistance from Charles, to obtain the lady. Their conference is broke in upon by the appearance of Marplot, of whom a preparative picture is given. The forward blade, after having eagerly urged an introduction to Sir George, accounts laughably for a black patch which appears on his nose. Having formed some intimacy with the baronet, Marplot is asked by that gentleman to converse later to Miranda; Charles justifies his readiness

readiness to go upon such services, but paints him as a very blundering emissary.

Hearing business mentioned, Marplot's curiosity rises; Sir George excuses his staying any longer in the Park, by observing, that he has an appointment with Sir Francis Gripe. Whisper coming on, acquaints Charles that Isabinda can't meet him in the Park, but that her rigid, jealous father, will certainly go out in the afternoon; he then goes to know the hour. Here Marplot is sadly mortified, at not knowing the purport of his message, and determining to find out the occasion of Charles's abrupt departure, follows him.

Miranda coming out of her chair, meets Patch, of whom she enquires for Isabinda; and is told, that her father, Sir Jealous Traffic, has detained her at home; this knight's ridiculous attachment to the formal and tyrannical customs of Spain, is here set forth. It appears, that Patch, though really Isabinda's friend, has gained so much of the father's confidence, that he trusts her in the stile of a duenna, with the care of his daughter.

The waiting woman, who had formerly served Miranda in that capacity, takes the liberty of enquiring about a common report, that Miranda is going to be married to her guardian; to this the lady replies, that such a report is necessary, though not founded in truth. She then acquaints us, that seeing a man she likes, is the motive of her coming into the Park: Sir George appears to be the man, and comes forward in conference with Sir Francis. Miranda and Mrs. Patch, stand aside and listen.

We find, that the young knight is bargaining with the old one, for a limited interview with his ward;

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ward; in consideration of the sum of one hundred guineas, he consents to a conference of ten minutes, with this proviso, that he shall be present all the time; the old blade chuckles at having taken the baronet in, and leaves him. During their scene, two remarks drop, one from the lady, and the other from the maid, not very delicate.

After Sir Francis retires, Miranda, under cover of a mask, comes forward. Seeing his incognita, Sir George solicits a view of her face; this is denied, and he undergoes some spirited raillery, which he sustains, and replies to in an agreeable manner. Being brought to a situation rather critical, and fearing a discovery, she suggests a method of getting off; which is by promising, if he will turn his back, to let him know her meaning, who she is, and her place of residence; this he complies with.

She retires gradually, confessing, that he has inspired her with a very tender passion for him, then she rhimes herself off. The baronet, pleased with his conquest, hopes she may prove handsome, and promises the behaviour of a gentleman. Hearing no voice sound, he imputes the pause to her modesty, but begs she will proceed; receiving no answer to repeated solicitation, he turns round, and expressing some chagrin at being so jilted, concludes the act with six very flimzy lines, which we may justly stile prose bastardized into hobbling, unnatural verse.

At the beginning of the second act, we meet Sir Francis, telling his ward, with triumphant satisfaction, of the bargain he has made with Sir George. She, to forward her own designs, seems to relish the circumstance highly; and pays the old

old fool some compliments, which cause him to think, that he has secured a place in her heart. She makes a proposal to him, which, in the flow of good humour, she hopes he may comply with ; that is, if he will give her possession of her own fortune, she will marry him the day after.

The danger of this he is aware of, and declines the proposal ; finding herself disappointed, she tacks about, and mentions a scheme she has formed to baffle Sir George, which is to maintain strict silence, and not answer a word he says. This pleases the old knight greatly ; however, his satisfaction is rather damped by the appearance of his son Charles, who pleads hard, respecting his necessitous circumstances, but without any effect.

While the father and son are parlying, Marplot enters, who, observing Charles's melancholy face, asks Sir Francis for a hundred guineas, for which the curmudgeon gives him an order on his clerk. When Marplot goes to receive his money, Sir Francis makes a proposal to Charles for mending his circumstances, that is by marrying Lady Wrinkle, whose age and deformities are sufficiently compensated for, by her having forty thousand pounds. The young man's declining this proposition, occasions the old one to drive him forth with very harsh terms. No sooner is he gone than Marplot returns, counting his cash ; when he misses Charles, he hurries out after him, for fear of losing some secret. Sir George Airy being shewn in, Miranda is called ; Sir Francis sets his watch, and the interview immediately begins.

Sir George's attack upon the lady's inclinations is warm and significant ; the old centinel, who

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keeps watch, throws in some interruptive lines, but is by threats kept out of ear-shot. The lady's unaccountable and invincible silence, causes the enamoured baronet to teach her signs, by which she may answer such interrogations as he may chuse to propose.

There must be a mistake in the printed copy, where Sir Francis says there are *three quarters* of an hour gone, because the time specified was *ten minutes*. Sir George having settled the mode of reply, he proceeds to offer his questions; her answers are some favourable, others doubtful. At length, tired with his unsatisfactory state, he tries another method, which is to speak both for her and himself; and, in her behalf, produces a letter, which he reads and kisses rapturously. In the height of his pleasing emotion, Sir Francis acquaints him, that the time is expired, and giving Miranda the guineas, sends her off.

Sir George's imperfect audience occasions Gripe to chuckle, which nettling the lover, he throws out a prognostication of cuckoldom, and both the characters clink themselves off the stage with some Grub-street lines. It is astonishing how actors, or public taste, could bear such frequent intrusions upon sense and nature; rhimes were, I suppose, found to be clap-traps, and consequently gained some degree of estimation; but why are they not now rejected in the old plays, as well as the new ones.

We are next introduced to Sir Jealous, who we hear lecturing his daughter, in favour of Spanish reserve and gravity. Patch, with politic address, backs his opinion, and insinuates, that Isabinda is rather prone to levity and resistance; in conse-

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quence of this, he gives the maid a fresh authority and charge to lock her up, till the arrival of one Signior Babinetto, whom he expects hourly from Spain.

Whisper, who has watched Sir Jealous going out, hastes to the door, where he meets Patch; she informs him that Isabinda is now alone, and desires him to acquaint Charles. Just as he is going off, he meets Sir Jealous, whom suspicion has brought back: the knight questions him very roughly, as to what business has brought him near his door. This puzzles the valet; however, he starts a whimsical apology, of having lost his lady's lap-dog, and asks Sir Jealous if he has found the creature; by this device, he gets clear of the cholerick old blade, who nevertheless seems to have suspicion of some design.

Charles and Marplot next present themselves, and are soon joined by Sir George, who appears in the dumps: on asking Marplot if Miranda's silence proceeded from her folly, he justifies her title to wit, by mentioning, that she has often rallied him till he had not a word to say for himself. Whisper enters, and by speaking aside to his master, stirs afresh the inquisitive faculties of Marplot, who is a mortal enemy to all reserve: his stroke of desiring Sir George to ask Charles what his servant has been saying, is droll and in character. When Charles and the baronet propose going different ways, Marplot has so strong an inclination to discover what the former is about, that though he is roughly refused the privilege of going with him, he follows directly.

At

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At the beginning of the third act, Charles appears at Sir Jealous Traffic's door, and is introduced by Patch : just as he enters the house, Marplot spies him ; and, by way of friendship, determines to watch him out again. The lovers being met, they lay a plan for their own happiness, and to defeat Sir Jealous's designs. An alarm of the old knight's approach, throws them into extreme confusion, amidst which it is determined, that Charles shall effect his escape from the balcony ; this settled, they part.

Sir Jealous now appears in the street, and breathes out such terrible threats, in case of finding a man in his house, that Marplot, who overhears, in zeal for Charles's safety, and to prove his courage, accosts the knight ; and threatens, if any mischief is done his friend, he will retaliate it severely. This discovery rouses Sir Jealous into such a passion, that he belabours the poor, unlucky, blundering intruder, most unmercifully. Still solicitous for Charles, he cries murder ; the lover descending from the balcony, perceives who it is that's raising the tumult : here Marplot improves the mistake he has made, by boasting of what he has done ; but, upon getting a hearty shake by the collar from enraged Charles, he conceives his errors, and, drooping like a dog that had lost his ears, retires lamenting his ill luck ; but not without some hopes of gaining such intelligence for Sir George, concerning Miranda, as may bring him into favour again.

Sir Jealous, full of conviction that a man is in his house, though not to be found, enters with servants, enquiring if they have searched every where : Patch still preserving his confidence, he renews his

orders for locking up Isabinda, then goes to renew his search. The maid comforts her mistress with the idea of gaining at last the man she wishes, and they retire.

Sir Francis meets his lovely ward in the next scene, and she plays him off so admirably, that he thinks her his own beyond a shadow of doubt. Marplot enters to them, who mentions Sir George's hundred pounds, and upbraids Miranda with cheating him of it : warm words arising, Sir Francis bids the inquisitive meddler get out of his house. Upon hearing Miranda declare that she will take her guardian for better for worse, Marplot banters the idea till he is threatened with the knight's cane, but having so lately felt one, he desists. Miranda, with great address, sends an assignation to Sir George, by bidding him keep from his old haunt, the garden gate, at the hour of eight. Her meaning is grossly mistaken by both the old fool and young one, and her openness increases the old swain's confidence, who leads her off, full of joy, with a Latin quotation.

The scene now changes to a tavern, where Sir George and Charles are discovered over a bottle : the baronet offers his friend some consolation, to free his spirits from that gloom which his late miscarriage has occasioned. The waiter mentioning that Mr. Marplot desires leave to wait on them, they desire him to be admitted : on his appearance, the unhappy adventurer puts on a face of confession, and endeavours to apologize.

When Sir George enquires after Miranda, he gives a very unpromising account, and declares her settled determination to marry Sir Francis ; to which

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which also, he adds her warning about the garden gate. Sir George does not immediately perceive her meaning, but, after a few short speeches, catches it; and thanks Marplot for so pleasing a piece of intelligence. His satisfaction puzzles our Busy Body.

In order to take so unlucky an object out of the way, Charles urges Marplot to go with him; he is pleased at being forgiven, but suspecting, from Sir George's behaviour, something that he does not understand, he resolves upon going to Sir Francis Gripe's, that he may stand a chance of finding it out.

The first scene of the fourth act is before Sir Jealous's door, where Patch receives a letter from Whisper for her mistress; and desires him to acquaint his master, there will be a fair opportunity for paying a visit to Isabinda, by means of a ladder of ropes: hearing the old man, she hurries the valet off; and, in her confusion, drops the letter: no sooner does she disappear, than Sir Jealous comes on; he perceives the billet, which, upon opening, he finds to be hieroglyphically inscribed. This unintelligible object causes fresh suspicion, and a glimpse he got of Patch's tail sweeping by, throws some part of it on her.

A servant entering, Sir Jealous enquires for some company he had invited; being told that they will all wait upon him, he countermands the invitation; calls for his butler, and orders that supper may be brought into his daughter's chamber. Isabinda and Patch are thrown into strong perplexity about the letter, which cannot be found. The maid running out to see if she had dropped it by
the

the way, is met at the door by the butler, whose business being asked, he says it is to lay the cloth in that room, for his master's supper. This circumstance suggests to the young lady some fresh mischance: the old man approaches, stops Patch, and questions his daughter about the letter; she pleads ignorance, and the chambermaid, to make up for her blunder, invents an assertion, that the paper is hers; declares it was given her as a charm for the tooth ach, and throws herself into violent agitation at the misfortune of its being opened, as the magic power is thereby destroyed.

This bait takes with the old knight, and Isabinda, collecting some spirit from the success of it, accuses her father of severity; to which he answers, that Signior Babinetto's arrival, will free her from all parental authority. Supper being placed on table, he asks the young lady to partake; which, from her stomach being already too full, she declines. He next desires, that as she can't eat, she will entertain him with a tune on the spinnet, while her maid sings a song; both these requests, through confusion, they are so unable to comply with, that one plays, and the other squalls most miserably out of tune, which provokes the old man to threats.

While they are endeavouring to proceed, Charles bolts in upon the wings of rapture; but seeing Sir Jealous, retires hastily, though not so soon but that he is perceived: to cover his retreat, the women cry, a ghost! a ghost! and throw themselves across the door. Having given the lover time to escape, they make way for the impassioned knight, who rushes into the closet, bent on discovery and destruction.

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He soon returns, and not having found the main object of resentment, lets his wrath wreak itself on the females ; his daughter he locks up in a closet, and then drives Patch out of doors. In this exiled state she meets Charles, and acquaints him, not only of Isabinda's imprisonment, but also that her destined Spanish husband is expected on the following day, and is to consummate the nuptials with all possible expedition.

In the midst of Charles's distraction, Patch suggests his personating Babinetto, and furnishes him a letter, by counterfeiting which, he may gain credit with Sir Jealous, who knows nothing more of the young Don, than what occurs by corresponding with his father. This politic hint revives the lover, and they go off to concert matters, by which room is made for Sir George, who appears at the garden gate ; through which he is soon conveyed by Scentwell into the house.

Miranda, in soliloquy, apologizes for a seeming breach of delicacy, in bringing Sir George to visit her in a clandestine manner, but the justification she offers is very allowable ; such a guardian as her's would justify any young woman for taking all steps, but vicious ones, to defeat his loathsome designs upon her person, and knavish views upon her fortune.

The baronet advances with polite rapture : in the conference which ensues, we find Miranda so prudent, that she wont gratify her inclination by a violent attack upon circumstances, but determines, before she leaves Sir Francis's house, to take the writings relative to her fortune along with her. Sir Francis's unexpected return obliges Sir George
to

to make a precipitate retreat behind the chimney-board; it appears, that Gripe's return has been occasioned by Marplot's persuading him, that Miranda had certainly some fatal, barbarous meaning, in the blunderbuss. Sir Francis desires Scentwell to throw an orange peel behind the chimney-board, this she evades, by desiring to eat it; but that being refused, Miranda desires the board may not be removed, as she has a monkey, which being very wild, might do mischief, if let out.

Marplot immediately expresses strong curiosity to see what he calls, aptly enough, a miniature of man; however, he is forced to desist by threats, and Sir Francis goes off to visit his rich neighbour at Epsom, from whom he expects a large legacy.

While Miranda attends her guardian to his coach, Marplot lifts up the board, when out bolts Sir George, and thropples the frightened, inquisitive blade; who, in his confusion, desires the baronet to break some china, as an apology for the uproar he has made.

Sir Francis and Miranda returning, Marplot frames a story of the monkey's escape, for which he receives a severe rebuke from the old fellow; who, after ordering search to be made for the little favorite, goes off again to prosecute his journey. Miranda upbraids Marplot, who accounts laughably for his misapprehension.

Sir George returns, when Marplot begs to be excused, and is, upon his submission, forgiven. Patch enters, and acquaints Sir George, that a friend of his wants assistance: on being told that it is Charles, he determines to wait on him, but declines Marplot's company, who expresses great de-
sire

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fire of going also ; and to prevent him, insists he may stay with Miranda, so concludes the fourth act.

At the beginning of the fifth, we meet Miranda, telling Patch that she has taken a bold and hazardous step, by venturing upon a husband, whose disposition she is not sufficiently acquainted with : after ordering Scentwell to pack up her jewels, she is going to leave the house ; at which time most inopportunately, she meets Sir Francis, who having found himself summoned upon a sham message, has declined the continuation of his journey.

Scentwell entering abruptly with a diamond necklace in her hand, occasions some confusion ; but Miranda passes it off with ready address, and turns the matter quite off, by telling him of Isabinda's approaching marriage with a Spanish Don, to which she is invited : the amorous guardian, hoping that the sight of matrimony may whet his ward's appetite for a similar feast ; he promises to go, and receiving an equivocal declaration from Miranda, that if ever she marries, it must be in the course of that day ; he leads her off with terms of most triumphant joy.

Sir Jealous next appears, who being told by a servant that Signior Babinetto is arrived, receives, and brings Charles, attended by Sir George, as Mr. Meanwell, forward : after some attempts at Spanish, which Sir Jealous is very imperfect in, the conversation is continued in English. Sir George, with great art, as a deputed guardian to the young Don, and many plausible arguments, urges an immediate marriage ; which the father seems very well inclined to, after being satisfied in one point ;

that is, why no mention has been made in the introductory letter of those five thousand crowns, which were to be settled on his daughter, in case of her becoming a widow.

This unexpected circumstance occasions some hesitation; but Sir George answering that the value of that sum is consigned to his care, for the proposed purpose, in various kinds of valuable merchandize, Sir Jealous is satisfied, sends for Mr. Tackum, who, as it appears, is ready.

The angry father goes off, and drags on his daughter, who solicits hard against a forced marriage, but to no purpose, she adheres to her resolution; after much threatening, and many violent remonstrances from Sir Jealous, Sir George undertakes the persuasion, and by privately communicating who the apparent Spaniard really is, gains her to the desired point. Her rapture, which breaks out a little untimely, is restrained; the father, heartily rejoiced at this unexpected and sudden conversion of his perverse child, gives her with tears of satisfaction, to Don Diego, and they all go off, highly satisfied, to the celebration of those nuptials which the young couple so eagerly wish, and Sir George has earnestly laboured to promote.

Marplot, without adverting to his former blunders, which have brought him into such disagreeable situations, now runs headlong into a fresh scrape; and having heard that Charles has borrowed a Spanish habit, determines to enquire about him at Sir Jealous Traffic's. Pat to his purpose, a servant comes out of the house, of whom he asks if there be a gentleman in a Spanish habit at his master's; from the minuteness of his enquiry, and

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saying he thought a friend of his might be there in disguise, the footman suspects a possibility of imposition, and calls his master.

When Sir Jealous comes forth, he accosts Marplot churlishly, demanding his business; on mention of a Spanish habit, he is supposed to be a friend of Babinetto's, and is questioned as such, but not being able to give any intelligent account of who or what he wants, the old gentleman grows warm, and perceiving that he is the person who had threatened him with half a dozen mirmidons, he frightens poor Marplot in such a manner, that he comes to an explanation about Charles, which alarming the father, he calls in to stop the marriage.

This noise brings out Sir George, with his sword drawn; seeing Marplot, he finds out the source of evil incidents, which, to confirm, the bustling Busy Body calls the baronet by title and name, which unfolds the deceit, and an attempt is again made to stop the marriage; however, Sir George standing sentinel between the door and him, orders it to go on: finding himself foiled, he wreaks his vengeance on Marplot, who once more feels the discipline of his cane.

At this crisis Charles and his bride enter; soon after them Sir Francis and Miranda come forward. Sir Jealous accuses Gripe with being accessory to cheating him of his child; Sir Francis being desired to open his purse in favour of Charles, he declines any concern with him as a son, and declares his settled connexion with Miranda.

Here Sir George steps in, and claims the lady as his; this, she confirms, and, as it appears, has not

only taken care to get her own writings, but Charles's too, relative to an estate left by an uncle, which the Jew, his father, kept from him. Thus totally over-reached, Sir Francis leaves them with great heat of passion: after his departure, matters take a more favourable turn, and Sir Jealous, with a commendable share of good sense, cools into good humour.

The several parties being agreeably disposed of, Marplot asks, what reparation he is to have for the hard usage he has received; forgiveness of his blunders, and a promise from Sir George, that his guardian shall give him his estate, and make him happy. Thus the piece concludes, a very incontestible moral being deduced from past transactions in three lines: if we search for solidity of sentiment, or purity of language in this comedy, our enquiry will be fruitless; yet there is a pertness of dialogue, and a womanish whim of incident, that must ever tickle the lighter passions, and keep attention upon a pleasing bent.

As to the characters, they are natural and well chosen; as will appear upon their being separately examined. Sir George is a fine gentleman, with elegant ideas, lively feelings, and a large estate; he meets with a woman he likes, and spares neither money nor pains to obtain her honourably. One circumstance is odd, that he never once mentions his fair incognita after the first act: the author might easily have discovered to him that Miranda was the person, and a good scene might have been struck out, of her rallying him upon the masked lady; however, this is a very pardonable lapse.

Mr.

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Mr. PALMER, was in this gay baronet too much of the fop, indeed, it was so natural to him, he could not shake it off. Mr. SMITH has sufficient vivacity, without diminishing essential elegance; we never desire to see the part better supported than by this gentleman.

Sir Francis Gripe we find so complete a son of avarice, as warmly to wave every principle as a father, guardian, or man, to the insatiable love of gain; his preposterous amour is more founded in wealth than regard; his situations are pleasant, and render him rather an object of laughter, than of the contempt he really deserves. Mr. YATES, a great favorite of ours, for strict adherence to nature in his proper cast, was remarkably chaste in this character, which he played upon the most critical principles; and, certain it is, that though Mr. SHUTER may make the galleries laugh more, by a luxuriance of humour, yet he never can be so correct.

Mr. PACKER has done the inoffensive Charles for many years inoffensively enough; we have seen Mr. CLARKE exhibit him, but think the part far beneath his abilities; and, as to Mr. HULL, who goes on for him at present in Covent Garden, we never wish to meet him in any but the graver parts of comedy, many of which he would support in a very respectable manner. Why is not Charles given to Mr. LEWES, who ought to be brought forward in such a light, till practice and improved merit make him fit for a more favourable one.

Sir Jealous Traffic is extremely well contrasted to Sir Francis, as his folly does not arise from a bad heart, but a deficient head; violent regard for his daughter, makes him anxious for her happiness, and
a mistaken

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a mistaken notion of the means to prevent any sinister accident, makes him seem cruel, when he really means well ; there is an open bluntness of expression about him, which Mr. LOVE is very characteristic in, and we think Mr. DUNSTALL equally happy.

Marplot, the main engine of this piece, is a very well conceived caricature of nature, adequately drawn, and prettily finished : notwithstanding a Busy Body in private life, is a very mischievous and obnoxious character, yet Mrs. CENTLIVRE has contrived to present us with one so inoffensive and laughable, that we believe many of the audience would be glad of such an acquaintance to exhilerate their spirits occasionally : we remember many performers in this character, Mr. MACKLIN very dry, insipid and saturnine : Mr. THE. CIBBER, egregiously comical, extravagant and incorrect : Mr. BROWN, by some thought a good actor, though certainly the worst that ever was seen, faint, indscriptive and laborious : Mr. GARRICK, lively and expressive, but too mechanical : Mr. KING, spirited and picturesque, with rather too much sensibility : Mr. WOODWARD, every thing the author or spectator could wish, possessing every beauty his competitors could boast, and exhibiting a suitable naïveté above them all.

Miranda has nothing blameable, but being a little too forward in her love affair ; she seems to have good sense, steadiness and generosity. Mrs. PALMER was very unequal to the representation of this part, yet, being an amiable actress, passed off without giving offence, Mrs. BULKLEY mended the matter

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matter a good deal, but we are much inclined to place Miss MACKLIN first.

Isabinda was very improperly given to Mrs. MATTOCKS, who is much fitter for Patch; however, she represented the young lady in a respectable manner: Miss PLYM was well suited to the part, as is Mrs. BAKER.

Patch should always be in the hands of Mrs. GREEN, though we have seen Mrs. PITT shew acting merit in the character, and Miss MINORS perform it extremely well. We readily admit this play to a stage existence, but we think it scarce worth any body's purchase for the closet; notwithstanding it is free from the heavy charge of licentiousness, which justly lies against some abler compositions.



King

King HENRY the Fourth.

An Historical PLAY : SHAKESPEARE.

THE King, attended by his son, Lord John of Lancaster, and other peers, gives us to understand, that the play opens with a newly commenced peace ; yet from what Westmoreland says, we find that a general calm is not established, notwithstanding a decisive victory gained by Piercy, over the Scots. Mention of this young nobleman occasions Henry to paint, with strong feeling, the disreputable contrast between Hotspur and his son, the Prince of Wales : nothing further material occurs in this scene, except that Piercy has refused to deliver up the prisoners taken in battle. In the next we meet Prince Henry and Falstaff ; the latter enquiring what time of the day it is, is rallied by the Prince for demanding any information concerning a circumstance so totally immaterial to his irregular course of life ; the fat knight retorts, by painting his royal companion as graceless as himself. This is very natural, for the dissolute always endeavour to level other characters with their own ; or, if possible, to make them worse.

This scene is chiefly made up of a quibble of words, yet is sensible and entertaining. When Poins comes on, there is a fine equivocal turn in Falstaff's character : some few lines before, we find him bent on a new course of life, but, upon mention

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xion of a robbery, which is likely to produce desirable spoil, he hears the matter, and joins in it with great glee; wishing that the Prince may be an associate, he goes to Eastcheap.

After the knight has waddled out of sight, Poin proposes a scheme of amusement, that is, to rob Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto and Gadshill, after they have acquired the booty: to this project the volatile Prince agrees readily; the mode of proceeding is settled, and Poin retires to provide necessaries.

When alone, Henry, though linked with such a dissipated crew, and seemingly involved amidst the depths of iniquity, makes some glorious reflections; wherein, his spirit as a man and a royal character, break brightly forth.

The observation that his latter years will shine more bright by a comparative view with the gloom of his former ones, is not a very allowable apology for joining in a course of life, which, in his own conviction, is held despicable; however, the soliloquy throws a plausible gloss on his character, and prepares us agreeably for the reformation he suggests.

In the next scene we meet the King, highly nettled at being crossed, as it should seem, by Hotspur, and his relations. Upon Worcester's attempting an apology, he is forbid the presence: after a palliative introduction, delivered by Northumberland, Hotspur enters upon his own defence, concerning refusal of those prisoners which the King had demanded: his address is very peculiar and spirited; his contrast of the rough soldier's character, to a perfumed, effeminate peer, is finely imagined, and happily expressed.

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King

King Henry, however, considers his reply as equivocal, and founded on proviso, that Mortimer, a subject hateful to majesty, should be ransomed. Hearing an imputation of Mortimer's revolting, Hotspur, with characteristic impatience, contends this point warmly with the King, and maintains his brother-in-law's character, both as a subject and commander. This altercation rouses Henry to some severe terms, and a positive insinuation, that further disobedience of his orders, will be attended with disagreeable consequences.

This peremptory threat occasions a flow of passion, which vents itself on Hotspur's side, in a very glowing stile. Being forbid even to speak of Mortimer, stings so home, that every trace of patience is obliterated; and, with the utmost heat of temper, he charges ingratitude and tyranny against the King. After spending the fire of his resentment in frenzied starts and bitter reproaches, he condescends to hear some cool and politic advice from his cousin Worcester; who points out some vindictive measures by the path of rebellion, which he deems very practicable, from powerful discontents which agitate many leading characters of the realm.

Piercy's expectation warms from this view, so consonant to his desires, and he concludes the first act with a wish, formed by wounded pride, and a kind of military enthusiasm.

At the commencement of the second act, two carriers are introduced, throwing some very low reflections upon their quarters and accommodations. After having informed us of their station, and that they are going to continue their journey, they make room for the Prince and Poins, who having removed

Henry the Fourth.

moved Falstaff's horse out of his reach, the puffed knight comes on, almost breathless with fatigue, calling for them, and describing his own cumbersome, painful situation : when they appear, he asks, partly in a passion, and partly soothing, for his horse. Gadshill and Bardolph giving notice that the monied travellers are at hand, they take their stations ; while Henry and Poins retire to put on their disguises.

Hearing a furious noise of " stand, down with them," &c. the travellers drop their cash, which the valorous Sir John and his mirmidons have no sooner taken, than it is taken from them again by the Prince and Poins, in buckram suits. This jocular design being happily executed, the victorious couple go off, enjoying their cheap conquest.

Hotspur, in soliloquy, now presents himself, perusing a letter, on which he makes some whimsical comments, as the contents are matter of excuse from some desirable partisan, whom he expected to join in his enterprize. In the following scene with his lady, which, by the bye, is very immaterial, he discovers much peculiarity and flightiness of temper ; she, with a kind of childishness, endeavours to wheedle from him, the cause of manifest perturbation, which, nevertheless, he declines communicating, and in a manner we think unnecessary ungenteel, though bluntness seems to be a material part of his character.

We are now transplanted to the tavern in Eastcheap, where the Prince and Poins appear, still enjoying their adventure. Henry, in the flow of spirits, boasts an intimacy with a parcel of drawers, and with Poins's assistance, plays upon the simpli-

city of one, in a manner that might very well become a Bartholomew-fair droll, but is too meanly farcical for the stage, though it seldom fails of a laughable effect.

After this unmeaning piece of buffoonry, Falstaff and his crew are introduced: the knight sets forward with a furious exclamation against cowards, not forgetting to compliment himself, as being one of the only three honest, valuable men in England. At length, he broadly insinuates, that Henry is among the list of cowards, but, upon getting a rebuff from the Prince, readily and humorously retracts his meaning, yet continues the insinuation: having mentioned taking a prize of a thousand pounds, and its being most violently forced from him again, he enters into a very curious account of his own valorous resistance, wherein such circumstances and contradictions occur, as must dilate the rigidest features.

After he has gone through the detail with most entertaining prevarication, the Prince enters upon his account, which reduces Falstaff to a dilemma apparently inextricable; yet with invincible effrontery, and quick address, he exhibits a masterly stroke of equivocation, by observing, that he knew it was the Prince who attacked him, and out of respect to the blood royal, would not make any resistance.

Just as this point is discussed, the Hostess enters in a violent hurry, acquainting the Prince, that a nobleman of the court desires to speak with him: Falstaff is deputed to give him an answer, which charge he speedily fulfills, and upon return, gives some hints of the civil commotions which are on
foot.

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foot. The Hostels again enters, and acquaints them that the Sheriff is at the door, demanding entrance, to search for some men who have committed a robbery. Falstaff, conscious, claims protection; he is ordered behind the arras, and the Sheriff admitted, who, being questioned of his business, declares it: the knight being plainly pointed at, Prince Henry screens him, by asserting his absence upon business; and that he will himself undertake to answer any charge that may be brought against the supposed guilty person.

The magistrate being dispatched, and danger with him, Falstaff is heard snoring: the Prince orders Poins to pick his pocket, from whence he extracts nothing but papers; one of which, being read, proves a curious tavern bill, the principal article of which is an enormous quantity of sack. Henry declares his intention of going to court in the morning, and says, he will not only provide for Poins, but procure Falstaff a company of foot. With this strange intention the act concludes, strange, we say, because however flighty the Prince might be in his general conduct, we cannot suppose, that in so serious and critical an affair as civil war, he would put a proved poltroon, a known scoundrel, into commission: but the author found it necessary, so without any scruple or apology, he has sacrificed royal prudence and decorum, to the preservation and enlargement of his favorite character.

At the beginning of the third act, we find ourselves in the presence chamber at Windsor: the King having desired his nobles to retire, lectures the Pr. of Wales with much paternal feeling, and eloquent energy; his speeches, though fine and pithy, are
beyond

beyond doubt, too laboriously long for the actor's expression : his son's vindication of himself, and promise of future actions, suitable to his dignity, show a spirited sensibility, which melts the King into a cordial reconciliation, who immediately gives him an honourable command, and appoints the day for his marching to meet the rebels.

Sir John and Bardolph succeed this royal interview ; the former complains that he finds himself in a consumptive state, and therefore seems inclined to repent of his dissolute courses ; but, upon Bardolph's blaming him for fretting, reverts again to vice, and jests upon the red nose of his Bacchanalian follower. Seeing the Hostess, our fat knight mentions his having his pocket picked, which irritates the lady much, as being a heavy charge against the credit of her house : a warm altercation ensues, in which they both display considerable abilities.

He asserts having lost a seal ring, worth forty marks, which she declares the Prince had often told her was copper. This occasions Sir John to utter some heavy threats, but, upon seeing Henry, he turns the subject off ; however, Mrs. Quickly resolves to have it handled, and to that end tells the Prince, that Falstaff had threatened to cudgel him. This causes a fresh and very laughable altercation, in which the knight is considerably embarrassed ; however, his old and constant friend equivocation stands by him, till Henry flashes conviction, by declaring, that he was the cause of this exaggerated robbery, which produced nothing but tavern bills, and a halfpenny worth of sugar-candy. This explanation, after a concession from Falstaff, brings all matters to a right understanding ; the Prince
acquaints

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acquaints his fat favorite, that he has procured him a charge of foot, then gives Bardolph some dispatches for Lord John of Lancaster.

From the two conclusive lines of this act, we very plainly perceive that Falstaff is much better inclined to a tavern than military operations.

Hotspur, Worcester and Douglas, begin the fourth act, in Shrewsbury: the former compliments the latter with generous terms of esteem. A messenger brings some letters, and the disagreeable intelligence, that sickness prevents Percy's father from joining personally the common cause. Worcester seems to think his absence a great damp upon their enterprize; however, Hotspur, with unbating spirit, thinks it will reflect greater credit upon their daring attempt. Sir Richard Vernon informs them of the powerful preparations which are moving forwards, to make head against them. Percy enquires particularly after the Prince of Wales, which gives Sir Richard an opportunity of describing him and his warlike companions, with very beautiful imagery. This fires Hotspur, who longs to enter the lists against such gallant opponents, though unassisted by his father and Glendower.

Sir John and Bardolph now appear upon their march to Coventry: having dispatched his follower for a bottle of sack, the knight, in soliloquy, gives a most diverting account of the soldiers he has picked up; his insinuation of misusing the king's press money, we believe fits many a recruiting officer. Prince Henry coming on with Westmoreland, asks whose fellows they are that come after, and make so wretched a figure. Falstaff acknowledges

ledges them to be his, and humorously considers them as merely food for powder, consequently good enough for that purpose.

Hotspur, Worcester, Douglas and Vernon, again come forward, debating whether they shall give battle the same night, or refer it to another day. Percy's impatience wishes to seize the earliest opportunity, and Douglas supports his opinion; Vernon and Worcester dissent. After reasons urged on both sides, it remains still an undetermined point; when Sir Walter Blunt addresses them on embassy from the king, who sent by him some plausible offers of pacific redress, in case any real grievances can be made out. In Hotspur's reply, which is nervous and circumstantial, he accuses the king of ambition, duplicity and ingratitude, not to be trusted; however, he desires a night to consider the royal proposition, and promises to send a categorical reply by his uncle Worcester in the morning.

Our author has judiciously concluded this act with probable ideas of peace, which bring on more forceably the operations of the next.

King Henry, at the beginning of the fifth act, gives audience in his camp to Worcester, who recapitulates the causes of complaint, which his majesty treats with contempt. The Prince of Wales, perceiving that all hopes of accommodation are vanished, and that war is to be the arbitrator, with a gallant generosity, proposes to rest the general dispute upon a single combat between him and Hotspur. This pleases the King, his father, highly; however, with humane condescension, he once more offers, upon submission, to decline hostilities; nay,
even

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even a renewal of royal favour, to his rebellious opponents.

There is a most contemptible piece of stage buffoonery introduced here, which ought to be repulsed, not laughed at; we mean Falstaff's sitting upon the same drum with the King, and tumbling down when Henry gets up; SHAKESPEARE'S luxuriant humour needs no such pitiful resources. Falstaff's soliloquy, where he investigates the meaning and value of honour, is as laughable an apology for cowardice as ever was penned.

Worcester, from a supposition that the King's smooth propositions are founded in fallacy, declines acquainting his nephew with them; and, on Hotspur's appearance, mentions such aggravating terms as precipitate a battle. Vernon's description of the Prince of Wales's challenge, is delicate and generous. On being told that the royal army comes forward, Hotspur and party go off to meet them, with a truly martial spirit. Here alarms are heard, and Sir Walter Blunt is slain by Douglas. A good deal of the skirmishing introduced by SHAKESPEARE, is properly omitted in representation.

The fat knight has another soliloquy, and though horribly frightened, preserves his humour; the giving him a bottle of sack in a pistol holster, is whimsically characteristic. While Hotspur and the Prince of Wales are engaged, he comes on vapouring, but seeing Douglas, falls down as if dead. When Hotspur has yielded his breath to his victorious competitor for glory, the generous conqueror pays an expressive and pathetic compliment to his qualifications: seeing his old companion Jack

prostrate, he speaks of his fall with friendly though ludicrous regret.

The coast being clear, our prudent knight gets up, rejoicing in his own safety, and applauding the means of it. The sight of Piercy, though dead, touches him with fresh panic ; however, he collects resolution enough to make him sure, and giving him a wound in the thigh, declares his resolution to claim the honour of killing him. Here the Prince of Wales returns, with his brother Prince John of Lancaster. Seeing Falstaff with Hotspur on his back, he is surprized, and is still more so at Sir John's asserting himself to be the conqueror of Hotspur ; however, he good-naturedly inclines to countenance his humour, and the knight lugs off his honourable burden.

King Henry, after sentencing Worcester and Vernon to death, declares his intention of pursuing rebellion through all its haunts, and thus the play concludes.

Though we do not hesitate to pronounce tragedy to be the most heterogenous production that ever entered the human imagination, yet we must contend that our author has in this piece made it as pardonable and probable as a union so unnatural would admit. In the tragic scenes there is great dignity and fire of expression ; in the comic ones, unparalleled pleasantry. The plot, though void of unities, has a face of regularity, and keeps attention agreeably employed through the whole.

As to characters, we find Henry cool, politic and resolute, well suited to his elevated station ; in performance, little more is requisite than importance

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of deportment, and propriety of declamation. Mr. SPARKS, in the former was stiffly mechanical, in the latter, irksomely laborious ; yet shewed more merit in the first scene with Piercy, than any other performer within our notice. Mr. GIBSON, is undoubtedly a burthen to himself in this part, consequently can't sit very light on the eyes, ears or feelings, of an audience. Mr. BANNISTER is better than either.

The Prince of Wales is totally made up of light and shade, his dissipated state and shameful companions, render him an object of contempt ; but his martial spirit, when called upon, and his real courage, so happily tempered with generosity, present him to view a very estimable character. As a rake he is pleasant, as a hero striking ; in the tavern a trifler, but in the field important. Mr. RYAN had an ease in this mad-cap prince, which presented him in a very agreeable manner. Mr. PALMER did the comic part well, but was egregiously deficient in the serious scenes. Mr. CAUTHERLY is boyish at first, and insipid at last. We do not recollect any person better calculated to do the character general justice than Mr. SMITH, he is well adapted by nature to give us an idea of the gentleman and prince.

Hotspur is marked a very peculiar character, exactly answering our author's description of a soldier in *As you like it*, "jealous of honour, sudden and quick in quarrel:" an enthusiastic admirer of fame, who enters the lists of rebellion, rather from ill founded resentment than any ambitious view ; however his cause deserves censure, the original motive of it admits of some defence ; while his spi-

rited conduct commands applause, and his fall demands pity from every generous mind.

A martial figure, with great voluble powers, are the requisites for this character; we have heard one Mr. DELANE much spoke of, but have too faint an idea to corroborate report. Mr. BARRY we often attended with great pleasure, his externals pleaded powerfully for him, and he shewed many capital strokes; but in the last scene of the first act, was remarkably deficient; the breaks and transitions wanted essential spirit and variety.

Mr. MOSSOP has power well suited to Hotspur, but having less ease and more sameness than Mr. BARRY, is consequently less pleasing. Mr. SMITH, who indeed is seldom any thing but Mr. SMITH, can never do the gallant Piercy justice; had Mr. GARRICK martial consequence, his other requisites would surpass all competition.

The other tragedy parts we don't sufficiently recollect for criticism; indeed, they afford no great opportunity for conspicuous merit to shew itself.

Falstaff is, beyond doubt, one of the most luxuriant productions that ever sprung from human imagination; a character so inimitably drawn, that by the force of irresistible humour, we are led not only to forgive the unprincipled knight, but even to view him as an object of singular regard. There is not a sentence he utters but feasts attention. The author has in this part shewn most powerful originality, and Mr. QUIN was in the representation of him a true disciple of Momus; his comely countenance, his expressive eye, his happy swell of voice, and his natural importance of deportment, all united to make up a
most

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most characteristic piece of acting. To point out one stroke where such uniformity of merit adorned the whole, may seem superfluous ; yet it would be ingratitude to the remarkable pleasure we felt from unusual excellence, not to mention that passage, where Falstaff's lies about the battle and buckram men, are pinched so close, that he has no no refuge but the very unexpected one of pretending that he knew the concealed assailants, and therefore considered the whole matter as a joke. There was in this place such a glow of feature and expression, as we shall never see equalled.

Mr. BERRY was a deplorable falling off, as heavy and unmeaning as a bare repetition of the words would admit. Mr. SHUTER's common fault, that of being too comical, lies much against him in the corpulent knight. Mr. LOVE is certainly correct, and stands next in our idea to Mr. QUIN. His figure, features, eyes and manner, are agreeable to criticism ; but we wish him a little more animation, a little of that luxuriance which Mr. SHUTER has too much of. POINS is well supplied by Mr. PACKER.

It is almost needless to say any thing of the ladies, they are so trifling : Lady Piercy is the very simpleton of tragedy, totally useless, and unenterprising ; we have seen Mrs. WOFFINGTON, Mrs. BELLAMY, Mrs. HAMILTON, and Mrs. PALMER, daudle on for this part, without being able to discover any superiority of merit, so very insipid is the composition ; indeed, were it not to compliment Hotspur, an indifferent actresses would suit it better than a first rate one ; because the former would probably take some pains, while the latter must undoubtedly despise so ungracious an undertaking.

The

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The Hostess, for what she says, is well delineated; Mrs. MACKLIN made her appear to great advantage, and we are sufficiently pleased with Mrs. PITT, and Mrs. BRADSHAW.

From what we have said it will evidently follow, that the author of this play, though he has manifested great abilities in the composition, for want of female characters and familiar incidents, has greatly abated the success of it on the stage; few ladies have the same relish for Falstaff's rhodomontades that Queen Elizabeth had. In the closet it must ever please substantial taste.



The

The MOURNING BRIDE.

A TRAGEDY: By CONGREVE.

WE are told that the ingenious parent of this tragedy, was four years finishing it, an old adage, signifying, that too much cookery spoils the broth, here strikes us, and we wish it may not be verified by the present object of consideration; but as we have hitherto avoided anticipation of judgment, let examination first take place, and candor, as heretofore, decide.

The MOURNING BRIDE begins with some very happy lines, spoken by Almeria. By the scene between her and her confidante Leonora, which is too diffuse and prolix, we find, that the Princess's father, Manuel, had deposed King Anselmo, to whose son Alphonso, she had been married unknown to her father; we are also informed, in a very poetical, but unnatural manner, that Alphonso, flying with his bride from Manuel's fury, was wrecked, and in her idea lost for ever; hence Almeria's distress, which she expresses emphatically.

Shouts of triumph are heard: after Almeria's resolving to visit the tomb of Anselmo, Gonzales enters. From him we receive a pompous account of King Manuel's triumphant entry: the Princess hears of her father's success with cold indifference; the old statesman hints his son Garcia's devotion of
heart

heart for Almeria, but that subject is interrupted by the victorious monarch's approach.

Manuel seeing his daughter and her train in the sable weeds of mourning, while splendor and joy gild every other part of his palace and kingdom, considers her singularity as a mark of disrespect, and checks her in severe terms. She apologizes, by saying, she keeps that day as the anniversary of her deliverance from shipwreck. This vague excuse, rather irritates than softens the King, who orders her from his sight, enjoining a change of dress. We think this order should be complied with in the remainder of the play, as certainly a person of Manuel's violent temper, would have resented in express terms, a fresh instance or continuance of disobedience; we don't remember to have seen this point observed upon the stage.

As the Princess is going off, Garcia puts in his claim; which Manuel confirms, by giving his daughter's hand, and appoints the next day for their nuptials. This sudden, irresistible stroke, overwhelms Almeria with a fainting fit, by which she gets clear for the present.

Alonzo here acquaints the King, that his lovely captive Zara, the Moorish Queen, is arrived. Before her entrance, some intimation is given of Osmy'n's character. Zara is received by her conqueror, not only with benevolent, but amorous politeness, which she receives with haughty reserve; however, the monarch resolving to persevere, frees her with his own hand, then addresses Osmy'n, who replies with enigmatical fullness.

Zara

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Zara, fearful of any ill consequence, apologizes for him, by imputing his concern to having lost, in the confusion of battle, a valued friend called Heli. The King orders search to be made for him, and concludes the act with a rapturous declaration of his passion in some tolerable lines, if they did not rhyme.

The second act begins with Garcia, Perez and Heli, in search of Osmyn; they get sight of him gliding across the Isle of a Temple. Heli intreats to follow his friend alone: when they are gone off, Almeria and Leonora come forward; the latter feels very natural, womanish fear, at being amidst so awful and terrifying a scene; but the former, made desperate by grief, seems to enjoy the horrors of so gloomy a place. Having gained the tomb of Anselmo, she perceives, with surprize, the iron and marble gates open: after making an address to the grave, as a refuge from care, and consequently the seat of peace, she mounts her fancy in very bombast terms to starry orbs, milky ways, liquid light, and seats of bliss; mere poetical trumpery, when thus made use of.

After several emphatic repetitions of Alphonso's name, he, in the habit and character of Osmyn, rises from his father's tomb; so unexpected an object strikes the Princess with astonishment, that brings on another fainting fit: he endeavours to call her sensation back, while Heli enters unobserved by him. At length, being restored and convinced of her husband's identity, terms of the most endearing nature are interchanged; but our author has certainly rendered the scene heavy, by extending it too far: he seems to have consulted

the indulgence of his own genius, more than nature and the ease of attention.

Perceiving Antonio, known by the name of Heli, their satisfaction is considerably encreased: while they are employed in mutual congratulations, upon so unexpected a meeting, Leonora perceives some persons in shining garments crossing the Isle, whom Heli discovers to be Zara and Selim: her ill-placed passion for Osmyn is mentioned to Almeria, and he requests, for mutual safety, that the Princess may retire, which she does.

Previous to Zara's entrance, Osmyn reflects upon the penury of sight, which only admits exterior objects, and those through necessity. This is not unnatural for a lover's extravagant ideas, but though common sense admits the great latitude and superiority of mental perception, we are not to throw a kind of philosophical contempt on such refined organization as the source of vision: but love and reason so very seldom meet, that this passage, though it might be spared, nevertheless stands in some measure justifiable.

Zara, urged on by her violent passion for the noble captive, pursues him even to the gloomy region of death. Seeing him in a state of deep, and to her regardless contemplation, she upbraids him with slighting the affection she has shewn for him, and urges some powerful proofs of love. In this scene, the lady discovers more romantic warmth than delicacy of feeling, and casts off every trace of becoming pride: she offers, through her influence over Manuel, to give him liberty, which, knowing her terms, he declines. This rouses her to the rage of a disappointed female, tinged with jealousy,

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jealousy, and she resolves to irritate Manuel against him.

Just at this crisis, the amorous monarch enters ; who, hearing that Osmyn dares to be a rival, orders him to prison and punishment : then concludes with a boyish observation, that love is the main spring of life.

At the beginning of the third act, we meet Osmyn, a prisoner, ruminating upon the transition from his father's tomb to an ignominious dungeon. He reads a paper, found in his cell, which, by the by, is very unnaturally thrown into blank verse : this scroll appears to be a tender, supplicatory address to heaven, from his deceased father Anselmo, for his deliverance and protection ; one word being torn off, causes an abrupt conclusion, and Osmyn moralizes on that circumstance, in a strange, perplexed manner.

At last, he comes upon the point of eternal justice, which, notwithstanding the professed privilege of thinking, he leaves just as he finds it : we agree with our author, that thought precedes the will to think, but cannot own that error lives, ere reason can be born ; or that reason, though a fallible, can justly be deemed a mere twinkling light, fooling the follower.

WHITFIELD himself, nor any other enthusiast, could have given a more unworthy picture of human nature's foremost attribute : Heli comes opportunely to break this chain of false, or, at least, partial philosophy.

Observing that he has gained admission by Almeria's influence over the guard, Osmyn enquires how she is, and whether he may hope to see her :

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being

being answered affirmatively respecting the last point, he expresses fears for her pursuing misfortunes in his person. The following comparison of himself to chaff, is abominably far fetched :

One driven about the world like blasted leaves
And chaff, the sport of adverse winds ; till late
At length imprison'd in some cleft of rock,
On earth it rests, and rots to silent dust.

Heli offers friendly consolation, and acquaints him, that there are disorders ripening in the state, which hang as a storm over the head of Manuel, and promise fair in Osmyn's favour. This raises the noble captive's spirits, and, for a moment, he fancies himself at the head of a conquering army ; which idea of exultation is soon turned into rage, on feeling the restriction of his chains : his friend judiciously recommends a moderation of such violent feelings, and advises, at least in appearance, an abatement of his aversion to Zara ; adding a desire, that he may cast his main hopes upon providence.

Heli going off, Osmyn, in soliloquy, accuses himself for questioning the impartial care of heaven, in temporal dispensations ; and, at the same time, blazons his father's piety in that respect. We are sorry to find in a speech of such moral and religious intention, the Book of Prescience mentioned ; as it immediately draws the thinking mind into an idea of predestination, which we deem the most uncomfortable opinion that human nature can sustain. The passage we here object to, reminds us of four lines in one of DRYDEN's plays, which seem to us
the

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the oddest flight of speculative fancy, that ever was committed to paper :

If fate be not, then how can we foresee ?
Or how can we avoid it if it be ?
Whether we drive, or whether we are driven,
All ill belongs to us ; all good to heav'n.

What a spacious and intricate scope of speculation, do the two first lines propose ? how vague and unsatisfactory a come off, do we find the two last exhibit ?

Zara entering, covered with a veil, is mistaken by Osmyn for Almeria, and therefore tenderly addressed : upon perceiving his mistake, he manifests surprize, which betrays feelings no way consonant to the Moorish Queen's wishes. This causes her again to upbraid him, though in tender terms ; at the same time, she pities his mournful situation, and seems painfully to consider herself as the cause of it : his reply is generous, but his exculpation of her, by bringing in *fate* as the source of his woes, is blameable.

Expressing a wish that he had not been a slave, particularly at such a time, the enamoured Queen promises, ere the rise of morn, to procure him liberty : the account she gives of love forcing his eye-balls abroad, at the dead hour of night, is a strained, unnatural effusion of fancy.

When Zara retires, Osmyn pronounces a short eulogium upon her internal virtues, and external charms ; yet concludes with considering her, from the violence of passions, as an object more to be feared than loved : here Almeria appears, whom he receives with the utmost transport, though incumbring

cumbring chains damp his tender feelings ; to be a captive without probable hope of enlargement, stings his heart. The Princess strives to sooth his pangs, yet is too sensible of them to check her melting sympathy.

Several speeches which occur between this distressed pair, are totally in the bombast stile ; particularly where Osmyn puts in practice that contemptible stage trick, dashing on the ground ; and the description of the effects despair is like to have on him, is highly offensive. In short, this whole scene, though of pathetic tendency, is an imposition upon nature ; equally injurious to humanity and common sense.

While they are sunk into a state of undiscerning grief, Zara re-enters, producing the King's signet for Osmyn's liberation : being requested by Perez, Captain of the Guard, to stop till the Princess is retired, her Moorish majesty catches the gleam of jealousy. Osmyn perceiving her, conducts Almeria off, returning thanks for the condescending notice she has been pleased to take of an unknown captive.

Zara sees through his dissimulation, and addresses him in terms which are a very small degree above Billingsgate ; for which we think the author highly blameable, since a royal character, though as subject to the unruly passions as those of lower station, should still maintain a suitable dignity of sentiment.

After indulging her fury in reproaches, she orders the guard, not only to confine him more strictly, but to watch that he makes no attempt at self-destruction. Then concludes the act, with an observation, which we take to be very well grounded ; that there is nothing more dangerous than love

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turned into hatred, nor any thing more vindictive than an amorous, jealous woman scorned.

Zara and Selim open the fourth act; by what passes between them, we find that she has deeply incensed the King, and that Manuel's rage has received fresh fuel from some accounts of a revolt amongst his troops, and the flight of Heli, with some other persons of distinction. Being told that the fate of Osmyn, even for immediate execution, is signed, the Queen relents, and resolves to defer his death. The agitations of a female mind in love, are here well described; the turbulence of rage and hate give way to softer passions, which so circumstanced we believe natural enough, even in a virago.

Puzzled to find probable means of saving the man she loves, we hear her threaten the eunuch Selim with instant death, unless he suggests something for her purpose: at this exigence he advises her not to discover any change in favour of Osmyn, but to request that execution may be done upon the noble prisoner in private, and by her mutes, as supposing the royal guard to be bribed. Here Manuel comes forward, dooming some rebellious leaders to death: by what Gonzales intimates to the King, we find some imperfect information has been received that Alphonso is still alive; by comparative circumstances Zara discovers that Osmyn is Alphonso.

This causes fresh anxiety, as his fate seems inevitable; however, she resolves, at all events, to attempt his preservation: for this purpose, she urges the necessity of his death, and frames a deceptive tale, importing that she knows of a triple league between

between Alphonso, Heli, and Osmyn. *Mourning Bride.* This gains Zara confidence with Manuel, who readily falls into her scheme of having him put to death by the mutes, and seems highly sensible of the obligation conferred by the zeal she shews for his interest upon so important an occasion. Orders in consequence of this arrangement are given, that no person shall have admittance to the Captive Moor, but such persons as have authority from Zara.

In the recollection of her jealous feelings, she throws in a suspicious hint, that even the Princess must not be allowed to visit him. Gonzales, with the true penetration of a practised politician, suspects the Moorish Queen's sincerity, from so particular and so emphatic an interdiction. Upon hinting the matter, Zara inadvertently slips out that she had heard of an interview between Osmyn and Almeria: this fires the King's resentment, to which she gives an artful turn, and retires, under pretence of preparing her ministers for the execution of Osmyn. No sooner is she retired than Gonzales mentions his doubts in explicit terms to the King, who for some time considers her as a sanguine friend; but being awaked from the lethargy of confidence; at length sees with the eyes of unprejudiced caution, and fires at the thought of his daughter's disobedient infidelity.

At this unlucky crisis the distressed Princess comes before her father, who indulges his rage, and loads her with reproach for the mysterious and ill-timed grief she wears; his passion throws her into still greater confusion of mind, and this her intemperature he concludes to be proof of some hidden, dangerous guilt. At length, the King's mention
that

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that he knows *who* Osmyn is, throws her into a state of mental agony, bordering on desperation, and she drops some hints respecting her husband; which, but that they are deemed the offspring of distraction, must cause the ruin of all her dearest hopes.

Another convenient fainting bout is introduced, which rather checks the subject. After some disjointed flights on her side, the King orders her to be taken care of as an insane object; when her father retires, Gonzales endeavours to sooth Almeria's grief, which increases to such an height, that she explains at full the secret of Osmyn's being Alphonso; then impelled by the force of a frenzied imagination, runs off, supposing she hears herself summoned by the mournful sound of Alphonso's dying voice.

Gonzales finding a first husband in the way to impede his son's progress to royalty, by marriage with the Princess, deliberates how he may best work his own ambitious views for the aggrandisement of his family: he fears to tell the King of the discovery he has made, lest paternal feelings should work him to a reconciliation; the captive Queen he also apprehends danger from, on account of her secret attachment.

At length he resolves, without opening his design any farther than by ordering Alonzo to procure him the dress of a mute; with this, and an intimation that Alphonso must be slain, he concludes the act, asserting also his resolution to place the crown at all events on Garcia's head.

At the beginning of the fifth act we meet the King, rather disturbed that Zara, nor any of her

attendants are to be found. Just as Perez is giving an account how Osmyrn is bound to earth with double chains, a mute appears, who, on sight of Manuel, retires precipitately. Alonzo is dispatched to seize him, on account of his having discovered such disorder, and concealed somewhat in his bosom; Alonzo quickly returns with a paper, and information that the mute had stabbed himself on its being forced from him.

Upon perusal of the paper, it appears that the King is most violently agitated: turning short, and perceiving Perez to be within ear-shot, he first reproves him for so presuming a situation, and then charges him with not only being privy to the disguise of Alphonso, as Osmyrn, but also of Almeria's intercourse with him, and Zara's attachment in proof of which latter charge he reads some passages of the intercepted letter.

The injured officer pleads his services, as deserving better usage, but obtains no other return than the unkingly one of a blow; after which he is ordered to drench his dagger in Alphonso's heart; this he startles at, but promises, on a threat against his own life, to perform. Enraged majesty then gives way to an after thought, and proposing to confront Zara, orders the cell where she intends seeing Osmyrn to be darkened, intending to be himself robed in Alphonso's habit, and laid prostrate as the captive is, that she may have no idea of deception till conviction flashes upon her.

Seeing the Queen approach he avoids an interview, and retires. Zara perceives him, and draws apprehension from his enflamed looks: we wish, at such an anxious period, she had not stepped aside for

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the assimilation of his eye to the dog star, which allusion would be forced and superfluous in any character, but is egregiously wrong for a *Moorish* lady, since in that country they have not such ideas of astronomy as we have, even among the men, and the females are totally ignorant of every science, the most familiar; therefore, mention of an abstruse one here is peculiarly absurd, but our author seems determined to wrap her up with similitudes this scene.

Supposing Selim deficient in some of his proceedings she upbraids him, while he, in a very moral strain, justifies himself under the idea of mortal imperfection. Two mutes, with that common tragedy appurtenance, a bowl of poison, are ordered to attend this wrong-headed Queen, which, as she hopes, and is determined to set Alphonso free, we don't see occasion for, unless it be to prepare the audience for death. Gonzales next enters to the prison, disguised and alone; he surveys the mansion of misery, he perceives the inner door to be unbarred, and enters with murderous intention.

Garcia comes on at this critical point of time, calling eagerly for his father; Gonzales soon returns, chafed at the interruptive clamours, however it appears he has done the deed of death. When Garcia mentions the city is all in confusion, and that Osmyr is fled with Perez to the foe, Gonzales asserts that part of the intelligence is false, as his poinard reeks with the Moor's blood. To prove this assertion, Garcia goes into the cell, and returning instantly proclaims his father murderer of the King.

This dire mistake throws them into the utmost confusion, and the old statesman wishes to atone it with the sacrifice of his own life ; however, as things are circumstanced, they resolve to conceal Manuel's fate, and for this purpose Alonzo is ordered to sever his head from the dead trunk. This done, they go off to oppose the insurrection.

Zara, teeming with gloomy sentiments and fatal resolutions, comes forward, attended by Selim and her mutes : the still horror of the scene affects her, she sends the mutes to tell Alphonso that she waits him, and orders Selim to acquaint the King she has done what he commanded. When the mutes return, with unusual terror in their eyes, she enquires the cause, which they disclose by opening the back scene. Perceiving the horrid, headless trunk, and from the garment supposing it to be Osmyn, she indulges deep grief, though it appears that she came resolved to die, and to carry the object of affection to the grave with her.

While she is in the utmost agony of mind, Selim enters, and telling her the King is no where to be found, she stabs him. The faithful eunuch, wishing to save his mistress, warns her not to drink the poison, and is going to inform her that Alphonso is alive, but death checks him in the instant of information. Zara proceeds to finish her weary life, but the author has run her into a sad mistake ; being a Mahometan, she should not talk of her spirit's meeting Alphonso's in a future world, for in that faith women are not allowed immortality.

No sooner is the unhappy Queen expired, but Almeria and her confidante enter ; the Princess also comes to seek the object of her affection ; upon

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on seeing the headless trunk her grief rises to a distracted height : viewing the fatal cups, she determines to end her cares ; at the moment she is going to drink the poison Alphonso enters, and snatches her from the gaping jaws of fate ; the surprize of joy overpowers her, and she faints for the third time.

The conclusion of this play draws a very moral inference, justly observing, that though virtue may labour under occasional chastisement, yet perseverance in rectitude cannot fail of reward. The MOURNING BRIDE has been, at different times, supported by very able performance, and has drawn many brilliant audiences, yet we cannot help thinking it one of the worst living tragedies : it is apparently laboured, the sentiments in general strained, the versification in many places monotonous, and the plot equivocal.

In point of characters, we find the King a weak, blustering, tyrannical object ; a credulous lover, and a harsh father. His passions, especially in the fourth act, are laughable, and the device which occasions his death, farcical ; he is altogether the most ungracious load that ever lay heavy on the shoulders of a performer. The highest merit that can be attained is to pass through him inoffensively, and in this view we have seen Mr. SPARKS. Mr. BERRY rumbled him out in a most disgusting manner : why he should be imposed upon Mr. J. AICKIN, we cannot conceive, unless to prejudice his merit in public opinion ; his brother's general cast and stile of acting, should have royalized him in this play.

Osmyn is described to us as a hero, but appears in no other light than that of an affectionate, constant

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constant husband. His situations and embarrassments raise sensations of pity, but being totally out of the fourth act, and so immaterially concerned in the first and fifth, he becomes a very imperfect hero for representation.

Osmyn

We have seen Mr. SHERIDAN make Gothic attempts upon this part, for which he had not a single requisite : an insufficiency of figure, dissonance of expression, and limitation of voice, conjoined to overshadow every trace of merit. Mr. BARRY was happy enough to be the very reverse of the fore-mentioned gentleman ; his love, grief and rage, were all expressed by very adequate powers. Mr. GARRICK, we think, in the soliloquies, and the scene with Heli, outstripped every competitor ; but the Moorish habit proved rather too much for his figure, and the amorous passages did not flow from him with that natural sincerity, of which Mr. BARRY gave us an ample and very pleasing idea. Mr. MOSSOP is much too mechanical and boisterous, he cannot shake off the bashaw ; he should never attempt any thing in the amorous stile, but that sul-tanic hint of dropping the handkerchief. Mr. HOLLAND stiffened his deportment into a degree of awkwardness, and tortured the tones of his voice into an irksome degree of dissonance. Mr. INCHBALD has presented himself in Osmyn this season with a very slender degree of credit, being in every respect much worse than any we have named, except Mr. SHERIDAN. Gonzales, like most statesmen, of all ages, moves upon that ruling principle self-interest, and aggrandisement of his family. As a part he stands in a state of mediocrity, neither for or against the actor : we remember to have seen him

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him well done by Mr. HAVARD; and Mr. PACKER, who may be stiled the *Pack-horse* of DRURY LANE, does him sufficiently well. Mr. HULL has abilities, if required, to render the part respectable. As to all the other male characters, we shall leave them to their own insignificancy.

Almeria, who gives name to the play, is amiable in her principles, and pitiable in her circumstances; the author has run her a little into the romantic strain, but she has the happiness of opening the play with two of the best lines in the whole piece. There is a variety of acting in this part, yet her royal highness is undoubtedly too much upon the whine: no person whom we have seen had equal capabilities to Mrs. CIBBER for this part; Mrs. BELLAMY, though inferior in requisites, must not be placed far behind; her painting of distraction was more faint, but love and tenderness she always expressed with admirable feeling. Miss MACKLIN, about seventeen years ago, by the instruction of, and playing with Mr. GARRICK, supported Almeria through a considerable run, with much credit, and really struck out several beauties; but her feelings, though correct in tragedy, always wanted the animation of expression; her voice was too thin and contracted. Miss YOUNG, whom we consider as a rising actress, has shewn ability in the part, but we object to this lady's frequent attempts at what she can't execute; striving to excel is, no doubt, a laudable ambition, but as a performer should not overstep the *modesty* of nature, no more should he or she strain the *powers* of nature; it is better to be a little below, than above the point of rectitude.

Zara

Zara is, beyond dispute, the most indelicate Queen that can well be imagined ; she is vicious and mean, gross in sentiment, and vulgar in expression. Had she been more delicate in the former, and more reserved in the latter, she might have attracted some degree of humane concern ; but, as she is, good sense and decorum must frown through the four first acts, while ridicule attends her and the head-shaking ministers of death in the fifth. The author's peculiar unhappiness in the catastrophe of this leading character, is plainly evinced by an observation we have repeatedly made, that scarce any degree of merit can save expiring Zara and her dismal attendants from being laughed at.

Mrs. WOFFINGTON's figure and deportment were well adapted to the captive Queen ; but the violent, as well as tender passions, grated abominably in her dissonant voice. Mrs. PRITCHARD was majestic, but rather too corpulent ; in speaking and acting the part, she shewed correct and fine preservation of character. The amorous passages were indeed not so harmonious as might be wished, but in the jealousy she made ample amends.

We remember to have seen Mrs. CLIVE make a laughable assault upon Zara, which was nearer burlesque than could well be imagined. Had it not been to excite curiosity upon her night, it would have been one of the most unpardonable attempts that ever was made : exclusive of a voice dreadfully unfit for serious speaking, her person rendered all the King's amorous compliments ludicrous ; and justified Osmyn's coldness, admitting
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he had no other engagement to warp his inclination.

It is amazing that a principle of selfishness should cause people of great merit and good circumstances, for the sake of a few pounds, to exhibit themselves in a contemptible point of view. Mrs. HOPKINS, who now apologizes for most of the above excellent comedian's parts, makes rather a better figure in Zara, yet is bad enough, heaven knows. We have now got to the end of our remarks upon this laborious tragedy, and, without any hesitation, venture to pronounce it, though capable of drawing tears when well acted, the worst composition that any man of equal genius to Mr. CONGREVE ever produced.



LOVE MAKES A MAN;

O R,

The FOP's FORTUNE.

A COMEDY: By CIBBER.

THE piece now offered to view took its origin from two plays of BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, which we think the Laureat should have owned; but cannot find any trace of such justice and modesty in his prologue: two old dons, Antonio and Charino, open this play, talking upon a marriage between one of Antonio's sons and Charino's daughter; the choice of who shall be his son-in-law, and other matters being agreed upon, Sancho enters and presents a letter from Carlos to his father Antonio; soon after Clodio's valet appears, and in broken English announces his master's speedy approach.

The brothers next come forward; when Clodio's vivacity, opposed to Carlos's stiffness, makes a favourable impression upon Charino; who though old seems fond of festivity; the Beaux's remarks upon his brother's formal university air improve the prejudice in his favour; Clodio retires to change his dress, which gives Antonio an opportunity to consult Charles's inclination or ideas respecting matrimony; being desired to become a
man

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man of the world, the abstracted scholar seems to point out books as the most valuable and comprehensive enjoyment; when told that he should marry for sake of an heir to continue the family, he desires that care to be cast upon his brother, and seems ambitious of nothing but exalted knowledge.

This throws the matrimonial scheme entirely upon Clodio, who returns and entertains the two old dons with a very whimsical and pleasant account of the French princes and princesses he has been familiar with in Paris, the father, and proposed father-in-law enjoy his rhapsodical volubility so highly, that Charino proposes immediate introduction to his daughter Angelina, which Clody gladly accepts, and they go off highly pleased with each other.

Sancho, who has overheard the design of settling the greater part of his master's inheritance upon Clodio, determines to acquaint don Lewis, Antonio's brother, with the matter; the cynical old blade entering just at this point of time, and desiring to see Charles, Sancho opens the matter to him by degrees; upon hearing it he denies credit to the tale till Antonio, who comes on with a lawyer, confirms the truth of it; this causes don Lewis to use some very angry expressions against Clody, and favourable ones in respect of Charles; his admiration of and regard for literary knowledge, though he knows nothing at all of the matter himself, further than that Greek has a lofty sound, is humourously imagined.

There is a very grotesque and diverting oddity throughout this scene, and the first act concludes

H h h 2

with

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with a furious declaration of don Lewis's against the proceedings of his brother, and the hopes of his younger nephew.

Sancho is presented at the beginning of the second act in anxious sollicitation for his master's interest, but the positive father, bent on his own determination, cuts the matter very short; then calls all his servants to prepare the wedding entertainment: Carlos from his study hears an unusual bustle, the noise of which disturbs him; on seeing Sancho he asks the meaning of it; being told it is the cooks, he lays by his book, then enquires about his younger brother's knowledge of languages; the marriage being mentioned, Sancho gives a luscious description of Angelina, by way of warming his master's numb'd feelings.

Upon hearing that all his birthright is to be settled upon Clody, he bears the intelligence with philosophic patience. While he is in this state of cold resignation, the original of Sancho's picture comes on and immediately strikes the scholar's wondering eyes; from some sensible replies he receives proof of her understanding, but finding himself touched more than he could wish, he retires.

The thought of his calling for an OVID is very characteristic and pretty; Clody, don Lewis, Antonio, and the lawyer, now come forward; upon being bid welcome, don Lewis afresh expresses his displeasure, particularly against Clodio; concerning whom he speaks to Angelina in very whimsical terms; tired with being fretted, he goes off and returns immediately to Charles in his study; with whom he parleys about his ill-timed negligent indifference;

Lewis makes a Man.

difference; at length he persuades him to go and wish his intended sister joy. Antonio enters with the lawyer to get Charles's ratification of his intended settlement, which he promises to execute; but wishing to do it in presence of the lady, they retire for that purpose.

Charino, Angelina, Clody, a lawyer and priest next appear; don Lewis hints again to Angelina his dislike of her match. Carlos enters with his father, and confesses upon the second view of his purposed sister, those affectionate sensations which dawn'd at the first sight of her.

Upon saluting Angelina, he expresses himself with all the warmth of rapture; she sympathizes, which occasions him to declare that he could wish his brother happy with any other beauty: here Antonio and Charino interpose, while don Lewis encourages his nephew's amorous feelings, and seems determined to defend his claim.

The interruptions of Clody, and the replies of don Lewis, are very laughable; there is something pleasingly delicate in Carlos's readiness to sacrifice his own views and happiness, to the lady's real inclination if against him. At length finding, as far as modesty will permit, that she pronounces him the man of her heart, he resolves to support the privilege of encouraged love; and being roused by a challenge which Clody gives, he decides the matter by disarming his confident coxcomby brother, and carrying off the lady.

Her father highly enraged pursues, and the vanquished Clody is left in a very whimsical situation; here the plot takes a romantic and unparadonable turn; finding that don Lewis, Carlos,
and

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and Angelina have got on board ship, the two fathers and Clody resolve to pursue them; thus affairs are stated at the conclusion of the second act; between which and the beginning of the third, we are safely, though not very probably, conveyed to Lisbon, where we encounter don Duart the governor, and Elvira, sister to the former.

From what passes we find the don is a most furious creature, violently prone to quarrel on ridiculous, chimerical notions of honour; being advised to a moderation of temper, he flounces off with a degree of brutal passion: here a scene follows which is generally omitted, but we think necessary for explanation of the plot; as by it we know how Angelina has come on shore, and by what means she is placed in Louisa's house.

In the next scene we meet Louisa and Honoria returning from vespers. From what the former drops, it appears that her devotion has been interrupted by the sight of a most engaging young man; here don Lewis and Carlos enter; the former mentions their narrow escape from drowning, and their impoverished circumstances; the latter seems to think these matters of trivial concern, compared with the loss of his mistress.

His tenderness impresses Louisa, she resolves to set a watch upon his steps, and for the present, under cover of a veil, gives him a purse to relieve their necessity; don Lewis, at sight of the gold, concludes her some woman of great fortune in love with Charles; and upon very mean, mercenary principles advises him to cast aside the remembrance of his first love, for sake of the emolument which presents itself; however Charles un-

touched

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touched with the avarice of age, and constant in his affections, rejects so unworthy a proposition, resolving to search for his lost Angelina.

Antonio and Charino appear next upon a hot scent of the run-aways; Clody joins them in the utmost anxiety for the loss of a favourite snuff-box; this concern for so trifling an object, when the loss of a daughter and bride claims notice, seems to abate Charino's favourable opinion of his designed son-in-law.

The old fellows go off on their pursuit, Clodio stays behind looking for his toy; while he is thus employed a page, preceding don Duarte, orders him out of his master's way, the don himself coming up Clody banters him with pleasantry; a blow given, brings on a tilting match, wherein Clodio wounds and brings his violent antagonist to the ground.

There is something ungenerously cruel in Clodio's ludicrous remark of "having never fenced better in his life;" a man of real courage, and Clody though a fop might be such, will never exult over a prostrate, much less an expiring foe; an alarm being given by the page, and in consequence a hue-and-cry raised, the conqueror finds it prudent to seek safety in flight; accordingly he escapes by a precipitate retreat from the officers of justice, who upon seeing don Duarte think he has only received his deserts; however they take up the body in order to convey it to his sister's.

Don Lewis and Carlos now enter, having had some notice of Angelina; Carlos is forced by Louisa's emissaries into a chair, and don Lewis violently dragged after him, with a gag in his

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mouth; the next scene places us in Elvira's chamber, where we find the young lady preparing for devotion, and very oddly ordering *all the lights* away, as, according to her own meaning, she can meditate without light.

Clodio having perceived the door of this lady's house open, in the hurry of flight makes it a refuge, and steals into the chamber where she is; being heard by her, she most unaccountably enters into conversation with a strange man, in the most suspicious circumstances, whom she cannot even see; we are at a loss to know whether she shews most folly or resolution in her behaviour; if the latter it is not very delicate or characteristic.

Immediately upon confessing that the officers are at his heels for having killed an antagonist, though in self-defence, she by a violent stretch of humanity pities, and affords him protection; she indeed palliates her proceeding by an observation that her rash brother may want such indulgence; no sooner is Clody placed in a secure retreat than his pursuers enter with don Duart's body.

Here Elvira receives a violent shock from the sight of a dead brother, and the instantaneous conviction that she has taken the murderer under her care; she indulges proper concern, but determines to keep her vow of protection to the unknown person. Clodio interprets this very undeserved, and culpable favour as a proof that she has a tender for his person; but how he could suppose that, as she has never seen him, we cannot tell; after the governors are gone she calls Clody forth, and desires him to take advantage of the night

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night for his escape; this he gladly complies with, but intimates a future design upon his protectress.

The succeeding scene carries us to Louisa's house; that lady enquires whether her orders have been obeyed; being told that the gentlemen are secured, she orders that all passages of egress may be shut up, and a strict silence observed; upon Carlos's enquiring why he has been forceably conveyed he knows not whither, Jaques declines a reply, and leaves him with his uncle, whom he finds gagged on the floor, and whose dumb language he does not understand.

Jaques however returns and releases don Lewis; Charles and the old man upon seeing each other feel some comfort, though both of them are puzzled to find out what the treatment they have met with proceeds from; while they are expressing a mixture of doubt and apprehension the servants re-enter with an entertainment, the sight of which seems to remove every disagreeable sensation from don Lewis's mind; he refreshes himself very heartily, but cannot persuade Charles to partake; after supper it is intimated that he must retire, he obeys with a kind of whimsical reluctance.

The old don, suspicious of somewhat extraordinary, gropes his way to a window, from whence he sees Louisa encounter Charles; this fair dame with very little reserve, nay we might say licentiousness, confesses and urges her amorous inclination; she presents him with jewels as a token of affection, and uses every method of tender persuasion but in vain; the constant and disinterested lover rejects her proposals and flies her temptations precipitately; this naturally enrages her, and don Lewis,

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who has wished an accommodation of matters agreeable to her desires, determines to try if he can't talk her into good humour; but his attempt is made in such fullsome, though laughable terms, and is so far unsuccessful, that Louisa orders him to be again gagged, tied neck and heels, and thrown into a garret.

Carlos enters endeavouring to find a way for his escape but cannot effect it; in his progress from chamber to chamber he accidentally gets into that where Angelina is alone, meditating upon the ænigmatical behaviour of the people she has got amongst; Carlos seeing a lady alone hopes to make her a friend, his voice strikes Angelina's ear with a well known sound, she turns upon him and fills him with joyful astonishment; Jaques who has unperceived traced Carlos's steps, goes to inform his lady of the interview he has been witness of.

He soon returns with Louisa, who hears their mutual declarations of love, and also hears some severe strictures upon herself; finding an escape meditated, spurred by jealousy, disappointed love and pride, she takes preventive measures; however not time enough to hinder Carlos from getting over the garden wall; the lady feels this incident strongly, but finds some comfort in the idea of his returning within an hour, when she resolves that vengeance shall wait and intercept him.

The next scene introduces us to Clodio and Duart who meet in the street; it appears that the latter has been seeking after the former; to what end will appear by what follows: a conversation ensues, rather general than particular, and a bottle of wine is called for, we think a little oddly, in the street;

2. we makes a Man.

street; Clody's account of gallantry in different nations is certainly licentious, and in our idea vulgar; he may divert dissipated minds, but cannot be acceptable to good sense and delicacy.

His duel with don Duart falls in as a part of discourse, but why he should mention so dangerous an incident to a perfect stranger is very irreconcilable; when don Duart confesses a thorough knowledge of the affair, he seems alarmed; but gives up apprehension at an assurance that he is free from all danger; why don Duart should give Clody a purse, and why a man of his figure should accept of it, is not easily accounted for, however thus we find it; and Clodio in the fullness of confidence, manifesting a very weak and uncautious head, communicates to his new friend Elvira's humane protection of him, which his vanity interprets love.

Don Duart feels very just resentment at such behaviour as his sister's appears to him, and undertakes to carry a letter that he may come more particularly at the real feelings of Elvira; thus concludes the fourth act.

At the beginning of the fifth, we perceive the lady, last mentioned, in a state of deep mourning and profound melancholly; don Duart enters in disguise and delivers the letter; in order to effect that justice for a brother's death which her rash vow of protection prevented, she seems to receive the address of her gallant favourably; to draw him within her power she expresses to the messenger rapturous wishes for his appearance, and proposes answering his letter; this behaviour fills the brother with rage, which however he suppresses till more

substantial proof of her unnatural hypocrisy can be made out.

We next meet Louisa and Jaques; she enquires if Angelina is seized; being answered in the affirmative, she orders that when the stranger is taken also, immediate intelligence may be brought to her; she has a short soliloquy expressive of her resentment at being slighted for one she calls a girl; at the end of which intelligence is brought that the cold object of her affection is seized; Carlos directly appears in a state of captivity; after a few lines of upbraiding, Louisa vindictively orders a door to be opened which shews Angelina in the Turkish state of a bow-string, on the point of being strangled; the situation of Carlos and his innocent mistress here grows very pathetic, while Louisa's tyrannical exultation over their distress renders her for some time a very hateful object; at length melted by the supplications of the man she has improperly fixed her desires upon, she dismisses the braves, and restores the unhappy lovers to mutual affection and peace. This is an unexpected and pleasing turn, but rather deficient in probability; for if CONGREVE's maxim, which we are apt to admit, be right; that

“ Earth has no plague like love to hatred turn'd;

“ Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd.”

This favourable turn of affairs seems brought about unaccountably; yet be it as it may, it has a satisfactory effect upon the audience, and softens the disagreeable view of a female monster, which hitherto Louisa has invariably appeared.

Carlos having returned thanks for deliverance, enquires after his uncle don Lewis, who is ordered

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in; the old gentleman, upon seeing Charles, forgets his past ill treatment, and enjoys the pleasing circumstance of meeting his nephew; seeing Louisa he begs excuse for his freedom at a former meeting; being introduced to Angelina he expresses his satisfaction in very whimsical terms.

The governor is here introduced, who comes to search for Carlos and Angelina upon the oaths of their pursuers; Louisa bespeaks his favour for the lovers, which he promises; Charino now comes forward, with Antonio and Clody; he appears in a violent heat, demanding of justice, while Antonio acknowledges a reconciliation to Charles's proceeding, and gives the young pair his blessing: this irritates Angelina's testy father a-fresh; she interposes with modest, emphatic persuasion, which however he makes no immediate reply to; don Duart enters and presents Clodio with the answer to his letter; finding it kind, he resigns all claim to Angelina, and invites the company to his wedding with the lady Elvira.

The scene now changes to her house, where all the characters soon appear; Clodio approaches her in terms of spirited nothingness, and introduces the whole company to her; when matters are at the point of an agreeable conclusion, Elvira calls the officers of justice whom she has placed in waiting, and demands from the governor justice on the murderer of her brother; here circumstances are thrown into confusion; Charino finding Clody's dilemma, receives Charles as his son-in-law; and don Lewis with great humour, though very little humanity, diverts himself at his unhappy nephew's expence, till don Duart's discovering himself gives
a pleasing

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a pleasing explanation, and renders all the parties agreeable to each other.

After painfully toiling through this piece, which is highly offensive in many places to criticism, we are to express astonishment that a person so well acquainted with the drama, both as a writer and a performer, should have plunged into such unjustifiable irregularity: even in historical tragedies, where importance of events and dignity of characters may in some shape apologize for a breach of the unities, violent trespasses are not admissible; how much less so in a representation of private life, where only common transactions are exhibited; but the laureat seems to have studied character alone in this play, and consideration will shew that he has in his favourite point rather caricatured than followed nature.

The two old gentlemen, Antonio and Charino, are very whimsical fathers; the former wants to have one of his sons married by way of continuing the family; which of them fulfils this natural duty he does not seem to care, and upon Charles's declining a connection so inconsistent with his abstract ideas, very tenderly attempts to strip him of his birthright.

Charino is violently fond of his daughter, wants to see her happy, yet never consults her inclination respecting the most material concern of human life; he takes a fancy to the ostentatious, unmeaning rattle of a spirited coxcomb, and immediately sets him down as a most desirable son-in-law; without any other recommendation than a vivacity, and that rather licentious, seldom agreeable to declining age, there being nothing material in the representation

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representation of these two characters, and indeed many more parts of this play, we cannot charge our recollection with any but the three leading ones.

Don Lewis is a very extraordinary creature, he seems to have good nature, but then it appears to be merely founded upon the spirit of opposition; he is peevish and positive, more of a humorist than an object of esteem; many of his expressions, though gross, are laughable; the mode of performing this part is a cynic dryness of expression, which we are apt to think Mr. MACKLIN hit off more happily than any other performer we have seen; he was extremely pleasant without being comical; his retorts upon Clodio were inimitably contrasted; Mr. YATES is no less chaste and correct; but wants an equal degree of force: Mr. SHUTTER manifests a glow of uncharacteristic good nature, and plays off too many variations of feature; he seems too sensible of his own humour, and palpably chuckles where he should leave that totally to the audience.

Clodio is made up of rhapsodical volatility; he appears to have no idea beyond the character of courage and volatility; he seems ready to address any woman, or to fight with any man: intrigue, marriage or duelling are all alike to him; he is thrown into a variety of whimsical situations, and must be allowed a most favourable part for any actor who has suitable capabilities.

Notwithstanding Mr. THE. CIBBER must have collected many advantageous ideas from the original, his father, and author of the piece; we never could think him sufficiently possessed of negligent sprightliness; he too often mixed the formal elegance

gance of a Foppington, and funk the coxcomb in the man of fashion; he had also an unpardonable fault which disgraced many of his principal characters; that was making ludicrous faces, more adapted to Abel Drugger than any class of gentility: to Mr. WOODWARD'S Clody we give a great preference; as, to us, his figure, deportment and expression, fill up every satisfactory idea; he makes use of some theatrical manœuvres, which seem more calculated to catch the million than critical judgement, but as they are upon the whole innocent baits to gain applause, we do not think it necessary to particularize them. If pleasing the majority be the actor's most profitable consideration, as certainly it is, this gentleman may be defended in most, if not all of his outré strokes; the theatre frequently verifies what Cimberton remarks;

“ Nature's too simple, of all art bereav'd ;

“ If the world will, why let it be deceiv'd.”

Mr. KING has every pleasing and essential requisite for Clody, but we never had the satisfaction to see him perform it.

Carlos, as a student, is most formally pedantic, totally unacquainted with life; as a lover, enthusiastically amorous and romantic; he has courage when called upon, and appears not only constant in his affection, but commendably disinterested in his love; he is, through the former part of the play, a subject of esteem, in the latter an object of pity; we respect though we cannot admire.

As a part he is not very favourable to the actor, as some of his scenes are incumbered with a tedious sameness; Mr. DEXTER, who had very much of the gentleman in his appearance and expression, filled

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filled up this part some years ago with very pleasing ability, yet we must give a preference to Mr. Ross's requisites, ere his person increased beyond the idea of a studious life; Mr. BENSLEY is lean enough, but wants the soft flow of expression, and philosophical composure of look, which should picture Carlos; he is too austere in the beginning, and too boisterous where the passions come in: we remember one Mr. W. GIFFARD marching on for this part some fifteen years ago at Covent-Garden, who had so much of the antique paternal pomposity stamped on his performance, that in some places he might have passed for Alexander; in others for Bajazet; now Cato, then Castalio, all exaggerated: such gross violations of nature; such an unharmonious gallimaufry of acting, sure never was seen, and can hardly be conceived.

Elvira and Angelina are very lukewarm ladies, especially the former, who is much more of a fool than a philosopher; if any thing can be made of Angelina in representation, Mrs. BULKLEY's talents appear well adapted to make the burthen agreeable.

Louisa is as contemptible a female as we know; grossly licentious, and naturally cruel in her temper; indeed she softens at last, and throws off the monster; but we think that since so unworthy a female was introduced, it would have been but barely consonant to public justice to have punished her in some manner suitable to her culpable behaviour; instead of which, she is allowed to huddle up an advantageous match with a worthy man, who has addressed her for years: Mrs. HAMILTON did this lady great justice; we may say entered too

far into the author's meaning, for it is blameable to exhibit offensive pictures of nature in strong colours.

When we look back upon this piece, we must again censure and lament Mr. CIBBER's hardness to venture and work upon so pantomimical a plot, highly improbable and grossly irregular; the sentiments, in many parts of this comedy, convey gross ideas; many of the scenes are too long, others totally insignificant: the dialogue is natural and sprightly, though void of wit and elegance; the moral very vague, lying wholly in this, that the passion of love will inspire a man to rouse up principles of reason and action, which, till he feels that passion, lie dormant in his breast: what utility is inculcated hereby, we know not; but this we know, that young minds may be prejudiced by the capital figure in this piece of theatrical painting.

Upon the whole, if an audience chuse merely to laugh, the FOP's FORTUNE, when well performed, will gratify that wish; but we cannot by any means recommend it to perusal; if in the closet it escapes tainting the mind, which we doubt, it may be safely asserted, that no instruction can be derived from the piece.

The DISTRESSED MOTHER.

A TRAGEDY: By AM. PHILIPS.

ORESTES, the son of Agamemnon, in character of ambassador from several Grecian states, opens this piece meeting most unexpectedly, and with much joy, his faithful friend Pylades, from whom he had been separated by a storm at sea; his appearance and splendid retinue occasion friendly congratulation upon the apparent favourable reverse of fortune; but we find that an amorous feeling damps any pleasure which might be derived from the eminence of his station.

Pylades expresses surprize and concern at this painful weakness, especially as he supposed his princely intimate long since freed from such an effeminating bondage. By Orestes's exculpatory explanation, we find that Hermione, daughter of Menelaus, who has betrothed her to Pyrrhus king of Epirus, is the object of his affection; we also learn, that he had endeavoured to shake off the influence of her charms, but being unluckily deputed a public minister to the court of his rival, where he cannot avoid seeing the princess, love flows in upon him with a returning and resistless tide.

The subject of his embassy is rather strange and disgraceful to his employers; a vindictive demand of Aftyanax, Hector's son, who, with his mother Andromache, are captives at the court of Epirus:

K k k 2

Orestes

Distressed Mother.

Orestes in this scene shews himself a man of very violent passions, and therefore ill calculated for public trust; a gleam of hope breaks in upon the agitated lover, on being informed that a preference shewn to Andromache by Pyrrhus, occasions Hermione to turn her thoughts from the cold monarch to her first lover's transports.

Here Pyrrhus enters to give audience; when Orestes delivers his address, in as manly, nervous, and plausible terms, as the subject of it will admit; a great share of dignified humanity breaks forth from Pyrrhus in his replies; his determination to guard the fatherless and widow, amidst every peril, would manifest true magnanimity of mind, but that we find an amorous inclination at the bottom of it; after many remonstrances, the ambassador sounds Pyrrhus respecting Hermione; the monarch's answer is doubtful, however he sends Orestes upon the agreeable errand of seeing the idol of his heart.

Upon Phoenix's observation to Pyrrhus, that he is encouraging a rival, he expresses a desire of being freed from the Princess, at any rate; here Andromache and her confidante Cephisa approach; the former being addressed by Pyrrhus, she weeping turns the discourse to her son Astyanax: mention of him occasions the king to tell her what the Grecian states demand; she claims protection, which he promises, but taxed with a proviso of having his love returned.

His propositions are ardent and flattering, but the royal widow's inflexible attachment to the memory of her first lord, thwarts his views and solicitations, insomuch that he shews resentment, but

Dressed Mother.

gives her time for consideration; desiring she may visit the child, and reflect while she is embracing him, whether to become a queen, and save her darling boy, or remain deaf to intreaty, and lose him by an obstinate persistence in widowhood.

Andromache in a short, pathetic soliloquy, founded more on masculine heroism than maternal tenderness, seems to resolve upon his fate, and expresses a determination to share it; thus ends the first act.

Hermione begins the second with her attendant Cleone, whom we perceive to be a partner of her bosom secrets; it appears that the princess had refused an audience to Orestes, but by persuasion now agrees with his request; a point of confusion, wrought by her sense of the unworthy treatment she has given him, occasioned the refusal, and a spark of pride that he should find her in a foreign court, neglected by the man to whom she is betrothed, strengthens her distress of mind; being irritated against Pyrrhus by Cleone, she determines, amidst the warmth of jealous resentment, to take the advantage of Orestes's embassy, and, under his care, once again to seek her father's kingdom.

This princess, though somewhat justified by the idea of a rival, triumphs rather too vindictively over the unhappy mother and her distracted son; her passion for Pyrrhus appears very warm, though her sensibility perceives and allows the merit of Orestes. Here the ambassador makes his appearance, and paints his successful, yet unabating passion, in very emphatic terms; hearing that Pyrrhus refuses to deliver up Astyanax, her jealous resentment kindles a-fresh, and she cheers her lover's drooping

Distressed Mother.

drooping spirits with some tender expressions; but upon being told by him that Pyrrhus neglects her charms, wounded pride confesses impatient feelings, and Orestes falls under blame for suggesting an idea so mortifying to beauty.

After several struggles and changes of passion she resolves, unless Pyrrhus delivers up the captive boy, to return with Orestes; this gives the prince singular satisfaction, as he cannot suppose compliance from the monarch; Pyrrhus approaches, and to the ambassador's great astonishment, consents to the demand made by the Grecians. Thunder-struck with so unexpected a change, Orestes makes a confused, and indeed very uncharacteristic reply; the agitation of his mind is much increased by Pyrrhus's declaration, that he will, on the succeeding day, receive Hermione as his bride, and from Orestes, as representative of her father. Pyrrhus having gained a momentary triumph over his prejudice in favour of Andromache, boasts of it in such a stile that his bosom counsellor Phœnix, who sees with the discerning eyes of unimpassioned age, seems to think his struggles like those of a lion in the foils, which only serve to entangle him more deeply; the statesman expresses his doubts, which the royal lover deems ill grounded, though he is obliged to slip out an acknowledgement, how difficult it is to root up a settled attachment from the heart; the second act concludes with a simile too flowery and poetical for an agitated mind.

At the beginning of the third act we meet the two friends, Pylades and Orestes, the latter violently lamenting his wayward fate, the former endeavouring, by cool persuasion, to appease his passions;

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sions; which however hurry on to the desperate and unjustifiable extremity of bearing his mistress off by force: being made sensible how contrary to his station and public faith such an act would be, he requests Pylades to take charge of Astyanax, while he resolves to undertake the enterprize alone; but rather than suffer this, his faithful companion resolves to share the enterprize however dangerous and culpable.

This point settled, Hermione enters, and is acquainted by Orestes that Pyrrhus has consented to espouse her; though she doubts the principle on which the monarch's sudden change is founded, yet she appears extremely willing to embrace it. Orestes goes off with a seeming reconciliation to the circumstance, upon which, like a true woman, she seems nettled that her old lover should so tamely yield his hopes to the new one; however the approaching gratification of her real inclination dissipates the transient cloud into smiles of joy, and she breaks into a rapturous eulogium on the heroism of her intended bridegroom.

Andromache here with untimely grief comes upon the princess, and in very moving terms solicits her interposition in favour of Astyanax; to which she makes a cold and rather disdainful reply, that concludes with an insulting taunt, the offspring of a little, rather than a great mind, which latter species maintains dignity even in resentment.

Soon after Hermione retires, Pyrrhus enters enquiring for her; perceiving him distant, Andromache's fears for her child increase, and for some time she wants resolution to address him on the subject;

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subject; this he interprets coldness tinged with pride; she makes a motion to retire, which occasions him to mention, with some degree of ruffled temper, the surrender of her son; so heart-wounding a circumstance gets the better of modest, timid reserve, and she sues for pity.

Pyrrhus sustains her supplications for some time with unmoved firmness; at length, touched with her complaints, he orders their attendants to withdraw, then explains the state of his own heart, and his political concerns; tells her he is ready to send away Hermione, even at the utmost peril of vindictive nations, if she will become partner of his bed; he retires with again, and finally, submitting to her choice, meeting him in the temple, or losing her son for ever.

Brought to this painful dilemma, she recapitulates some very powerful motives for declining a marriage with Pyrrhus, who was a main agent in the destruction of her former husband Hector, his family and country; however maternal feelings at length prevail, she gives up every other consideration to the preservation of her son, and then rhimes herself off with more jingle than meaning.

At the beginning of the fourth act we again meet the distressed mourner confirming the resolution just mentioned, and hinting to Cephisa some secret design which demands her confidence: matters thus settled, she goes off to be robed for royalty, and seems for the present to wear a heart somewhat lightened of its mortifying load. Hermione now presents herself with a countenance full of sullen and vindictive sorrow; it appears she has heard of the intended nuptials, and enquires for

Orestes,

Disfress'd Menelaus

Orestes, who enters almost on the word; revenge for the slight she has received is instantaneously proposed, which Orestes seems ready to undertake by open force of arms, but her impatience from jealous rage insists upon immediate satisfaction, even in the temple.

He very justly remonstrates against a proceeding so contrary to the law of nations, as for him to make an assault upon a monarch who has hospitably and honourably received him in the confidential stile of an ambassador; however, the result of this conference shews, that a truly jealous woman is not to be persuaded by reason nor humanity, and that a man totally enslaved by love is liable to commit the most unjustifiable actions, under persuasion of the object he adores.

After Orestes retires to execute the dire command Hermione has enjoined, she triumphs in the idea of vengeance, but seeing Pyrrhus approach, immediately softens from her sanguinary purposes, and sends Cleone after Orestes; a short scene ensues between her and the monarch, when being again enraged by his coldness, she goes off with threats of fatal tendency.

Phœnix after her departure expresses fear of his master's safety, while Pyrrhus, intoxicated with love, has no apprehension but for the safety of Andromache and her son: the intended queen, decked in the magnificence of bridal garments, next appears; however the mental gloom seems invariably fixed, and we perceive that external grandeur, often the ease, is but the covering of internal sorrow.

She relates with feminine credulity a dream, from whence she forms the gloomy resolution, which was very common in her days, of ending her cares by suicide, after she had secured Astyanax's life by fulfilling her promise to Pyrrhus; this may have a portion of heathen heroism and delicacy in it, but wants our idea of true resolution, which makes it cowardice to fly cares by such means, and maternal tenderness, which will encounter any difficulty to watch the tender years of an infant offspring, she concludes the fourth act with assimilating herself to a victim going to sacrifice, a sentiment very trite, but well enough applied to her situation.

Act the fifth commences with Hermione in soliloquy, full of horrors at having doomed the object of her affection to death; there is great variety of acting merit in this speech, and the agonizing throws of a mind torn between love, jealousy, revenge and repentance, are pictured strikingly by the pencil of nature. Cleone comes to the aid of her unhappy mistress, and rouses up her vengeance, by describing Pyrrhus's progress to the temple, and the mortifying satisfaction which shone in his countenance; borne beyond every degree of calm reflection, or patient sufferance, she indulges the most ungovernable passion, and renews her vindictive threats with double fury. Upon the entrance of Orestes, who informs her that according to her wish and express order Pyrrhus had been slain at the altar; a most striking, and we think natural, turn of mind affects the princess; she hears the manner of Pyrrhus's fall with a kind of fullen distraction, then breaks forth

Disgraced Mother.

in the fullness of passion against Orestes, for having so readily obeyed the precipitate order of unthinking jealousy; the ambassador vainly endeavours to vindicate his proceeding, while she leaves him with most virulent terms of reprobation.

In soliloquy he reflects upon himself for being hurried by love into so unjustifiable an action, especially for one so ready to accuse him of the mischief occasioned by herself; Pylades entering urges the prince to a necessary retreat: lost to all feelings for his own safety, he determines to remain at all events with Hermione. Hearing from his friend that the unhappy fair one has expired on the corpse of the deceased monarch, his reason gives way to accumulating horrors, and at length resigns its throne to the most furious distraction; a variety of unconnected images distract his ideas, till at length nature yielding to such heart-racking struggles, he is borne off void of all sensibility.

Phoenix enters with guards seeking the Grecian assassins who have fled; Andromache comes forward, who declares that vengeance shall be taken of the faithless Greeks; then gives orders for the funeral of Pyrrhus, and concludes the play with that common, but moral inference; that the innocent, however oppressed, meet when they least expect it, effectual comfort and relief.

To consider this tragedy at large, we find it critically regular, both in the plot and connection of scenes, which perhaps takes from it a portion of spirit that plays better supplied with business manifest; it is so thin of characters, that a sameness creeps through many passages; the versification is sufficiently smooth, without an enervating mono-

Distressed Mother,
 tony, and the sentiments are elevated without such an indulgence of fancy as shocks nature; however at the catastrophe we perceive a fault, which is, leaving the audience in doubt concerning the fate of Orestes; as we have no ground to form an idea of what becomes of him, whether he dies distracted or gets back safe to Greece.

As the author has not scrupled to violate real history in the fate of Hermione, he might as well have fixed that of the prince: we are also of opinion that the boy Astyanax might have been introduced to considerable advantage, as a real personified object must ever influence an audience more than an ideal character, witness the ghost in Hamlet, who makes a much greater impression by appearance than the previous descriptions of him, though awful and emphatic can do; we hope it will not appear an Hibernicism to mention a ghost, where personification is hinted, since those chimerical children of the brain are cloathed with corporeal semblance.

In point of characters we find that Pyrrhus, who has been a victorious proselyte of Mars, like many other military heroes, sacrifices the dignity of his mind to the charms of Andromache; nay, he gives up common honesty by a breach of his plighted faith to Hermione; his passion is obstinately fixed, neither danger from abroad nor his own reflection can deter him. In performance he is a good, but not a great part; while in view he commands attention and respect, but he takes leave of the audience in an imperfect and un consequential manner; he melts from our view without affording the least reason to think we shall not see him again.

Dignity

Distressed Mother.

Dignity of appearance, and placidity of expression are essential to the representation of this character; Mr. QUIN possessed the former, but rather in a brutish degree, and the latter he was totally deficient in; he neither looked or spoke the lover. Mr. BARRY has done the part with more merit than any other person we remember, and satisfactorily fulfilled every idea we could form of it; he looked like a man that might well engage Hermione's affection, and spoke like one who must melt the heart of Andromache, had not grief rendered it callous to all other feeling. Mr. DIGGES supported it in a manly becoming manner; we know not any person now at either house, who would not be trifling or heavy in it.

The character of Orestes, as a man, makes a mean figure, though as a lover severely distressed, he engages some concern; he seems willing to betray his trust as an ambassador, and then turns assassin in obedience to his ungovernable passion; he has many rapid and violent transitions, which offer an actor fair opportunities of displaying capital powers to advantage: Mr. RYAN, though very uninteresting through the four first acts, threw more fire into the fifth than any of his competitors we remember; his painting of the distraction was truly fine, and the following words in particular he expressed inimitably: "I shiver----oh, I freeze." Mr. BARRY was uniformly respectable through the character, but wanted that quick fire of expression so requisite in many passages; Mr. MOSSOP is too boisterous in expressing the passions, and toils through the whole piece in a most painful manner, incumbered with a stiffness of deportment incompatible

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patible with real dignity. Mr. POWELL was languid, totally unequal to the princely Greek; Mr. HOLLAND had sufficient powers, but most rude and indigested; his mechanical formality, and ungovernable violence, rendered his performance in general, either insipid or offensive; Pylades and Phoenix are in point of acting merit below criticism.

Andromache, in our view, appears rather a romantic than a natural character; however the author has made her favourable to the actresses, and very interesting to the audience. Mrs. CIBBER was undoubtedly herself alone in the DISTRESSED MOTHER; her feelings were deeply pathetic, and her expression entirely adequate; Mrs. BELLAMY displayed considerable merit, but was not equal to her great cotemporary and competitor, though considerably beyond any other lady who has come within our notice; Mrs. BARRY we have not seen, but think she has requisites and judgment to do Andromache great justice.

The Grecian princess is placed in very odd circumstances, and indeed her conduct seems full as odd as her situation; love is extremely capricious, and often runs the wisest heads into actions either very ridiculous or highly culpable. Hermione's violent affection for Pyrrhus may therefore apologize for the inconsistencies which form her character; but her making such a fool of poor Orestes, and her insulting the distress of Andromache, are strong indications of a subtle, ungenerous, selfish mind; in action she must be very conspicuous, giving full scope for the display of every capital tragic attribute.

Mrs.

Distressed Mother.

Mrs. WOFFINGTON, in point of voice, was not equal to the passions of this part, but filled up every other idea with pleasing and forceable ability. Mrs. FITZHENRY, had she not been a servile copy of the above-mentioned lady, would have given much satisfaction; but just and impartial criticism must ever frown upon second-hand acting: if it was displeasing in no other view, this alone would render it so, bringing to recollection the merit of an original, which must ever strike more than the happiest imitation.

Mrs. HAMILTON, an uncertain, excentric actress, was not without some excellence in personating Hermione; Mrs. PRITCHARD, bating figure, did the princess peculiar justice, but upon the whole we are well disposed to give the capabilities of Mrs. YATES considerable preference to any who have gone before her.

The Frenchified regularity of this play, which some very able, but over-nice critics admired at its first coming into the world, is in our apprehension an enervating circumstance; the characters are too confined, and but indifferently disposed; Mr. PHILLIPS was happy in being personally acquainted with those eminent geniusses who shed so great a lustre on QUEEN ANNE's reign; from their partial friendship a much more reputable account was given of this tragedy than it deserves; for beyond all doubt it is heavy in representation, and languid in the closet.

Here we take leave of particular pieces, and shall now enter into more general criticisms on composition and action; hitherto we have religiously adhered

Distressed Mother.

adhered to our original principle of impartial investigation, both of plays and performers; we have not praised the dead to cut up the living, but very freely pointed out alternately, excellencies and errors as they have appeared; not one syllable in the DRAMATIC CENSOR has been dictated by friendly attachment or private pique; by fear of resentment or hope of reward; this assertion we defy any person mentioned to contradict with reason and truth.

We wish the STAGE, as a noble and useful institution, increase of success, and all the diligent, deserving sons of THESPIS reward; our censure is not meant to prejudice but improve performers who are not too self-sufficient, and our praise is offered as an incentive to emulative merit.

The character of an actor, though more reconciled at present than some years since to social esteem, is yet by many held in a prejudicial and painful light, without the shadow of reason; for if a player is in private character a good man, his profession cannot prevent him from being an estimable object; if every profession was to fall under legislative and general interdiction, on account of some dissolute and disgraceful members, what would become of even the most respectable degrees of life? is religion less sacred, because some who wear canonicals are not only a disgrace to their cloth, but even to human nature? is law less respectable, because there are among its professors wretches who sacrifice every idea of justice to avaricious, mercenary views? is physic less worthy attention, because some of its practitioners vend poisonous nostrums? is the army less honourable, because

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an unavoidable mixture of fools, knaves, and cowards, frequently shows itself.

If there is an alloy in all human actions, and every station of life, why should an uncharitable irrational mark of reprobation be stamped upon the sons of the Drama; those words in our most extraordinary penal act, respecting the stage, "*gain, hire, or reward,*" are the strangest suggestion that ever entered the human brain; if pecuniary advantage is to reflect discredit, what situation in this great stage of life is exempt? if, as we have somewhere found it sensibly remarked, dramatic entertainments are either contemptible, or pernicious, why should not the writers as well as performers be stigmatized; yet on the contrary, we find authors treated with the highest respect, while the poor actors are vilified, except where liberality of mind, and gentility of education, rescue them from such disagreeable and irrational treatment.

When we come to consider the powers and diversity of dramatic action more particularly, we shall perceive that a performer, to come near critical propriety, must possess an intelligent mind, many agreeable qualifications, strong feelings, and at least a decent, if not a good, education.

There have indeed been instances of some performers who having very faint imperfect ideas of their own, became by infinite pains tolerable organs to convey those of others in an agreeable manner, but where one of those parroted machines arrives at any stability of merit, twenty fall to the ground.

There is nothing more easy, or more common, than for a managerial finesse to preponderate against public judgment; an admiration of novelty

is a British characteristic ; this induces the audience to give every new performer a favourable reception ; such commendable good nature is anticipated by preparatory puffs, and corroborated by twenty or thirty pounds worth of well disposed orders, who are to furnish the deceitful and transitory stamp of noisy approbation. The object of this approbation fancies the applause deserved, grows consequential, and never aims at improvement, but falls in public opinion as fast as it rises in its own.

This, among many others, is a point of high reproach against the managers ; let young and rising merit work its own way, take care that the party of an envious veteran does not nip the swelling bud ; but, at the same time gentlemen providers for public taste don't palm upon us Dutch plaice for turbot, or necks of beef for sirloins ; don't grapple at so many thousands a year, but let your benefactors satisfaction keep some decent kind of pace with your own weighty emoluments ; a paltry take-in is below men of sense ; impositions are beneath men of honesty.



A SHORT

A

SHORT DISSERTATION

O N

Theatrical Management.

AMONGST the many similitudes which have been applied to a Theatre, down from a kingdom to a cook's-shop, the former strikes us most; we view it as a little but intricate state, where he who provides should, like the monarch of a political constitution, seek without any prejudice for or against individuals, after merit; which, when found, ought to be cherished and rewarded: regularity of business, and propriety of decorations, are matters of essential concern; but mechanical stiffness in the one, which too often appears, and glare in the other, not only offend but mislead judgment.

A manager as caterer for public taste, should studiously avoid adulterating that taste with specious trifles, splendid nothingness; Sadlers Wells would be laughed at should they attempt tragedies, and Comedies; why then should Royal Theatres trespass on the prerogative of buffoonery? we remember a prologue of Mr. GARRICK's, wherein he was remarkably severe on harlequinades, yet, by some unaccountable influence, he soon entered warmly into

an emulative exhibition of those exotic unmeaning whims which he had so justly condemned.

How much credit would have been reflected on his name had he banished such illegitimate bantlings of the drama, such incongruous medleys from the stage; to say that his own sterling merit, supported by so excellent a company as he then had, could not have defended the breach of common sense against the patched coat and wooden sword, is paying national taste a miserable compliment; indeed matters are now gone so far that according to the common proverb, we may soon hope to see them mend, since it is absolutely impossible they should be worse.

Is it not equally astonishing that Mr. COLMAN, who has given some pleasing proofs of genius, ever since he has assumed the reins of theatrical government, should have laid down the quill (for MAN and WIFE, and the OXONIAN, we esteem as nothing,) to mix with carpenters, projectors, &c. in the fabrication of snip snap changes, Witches, Demons, Mother Shiptons, paltry ballads, face making, tumbling, jumping, and all the wild &c. of pantomimical mummery; poor RICH, as knowing no better, was at least pardonable, if not commendable, for he gave the public what he loved himself; what excuse can be made for those who furnish their audience with such stuff as they must necessarily and naturally despise? there is but one, and that shamefully awkward; that their sole motive is to get money, and if nonsense can obtain that golden aim with more ease and advantage than elegant instructive compositions, vanish genius, what have we to do with thee! no, let dulness wave her
leaden

leaden sceptre, and lay the piercing eyes of criticism fast asleep, while our purses swell with golden harvest.

But is the genius of writing alone hurt by these dumb burlesques upon the dignity of human reason? no, the genius of acting is still more deeply wounded, as may be plainly evinced; in an established winter-theatre, it used, and ought to be the rule, to have every distinct cast of playing supplied by persons who kept uniformly in that tract; now we find the hero of to-night, often more properly to-morrow night, performing a character of no consequence, instance Messrs. HURST, and PALMER, at Drury Lane, and many others at each house, who occasionally mount aloft; this is certainly œconomical, though not commendable; for the managers hereby get two or three performers for the price of one; and are freed not only from the weighty charge, but also the painful consequence of men really meritorious.

Besides, if one, two, or three, of the stop-gaps either retire of themselves or are taken off by death, their places are easily filled by some of the thirty shillings a week tribe, who snatch greedily at an additional guinea to become capital, and bind themselves three or four years for a penurious pittance.

There is another resource for recruiting, which, though private emolument may have occurred, has these three or four years past afforded very little public entertainment; I mean collecting from itinerant companies people who have astonished villages and market towns for years; of whom there is not the least hope of improvement; and
 shoving

shoving them on under the artful shelter of a first appearance; each of these adventurers is engaged at such a rate, that the attraction of a first night, generally pays his, or her whole salary for the season; if criticism withers all hope the first attempt, there is no loss but to the unhappy individual, who meets condemnation; if they exist three, four, or half a dozen nights, which *orders*, and *paragraphs* may easily effect, the managers are sure to gain; and then the neglected objects may sink as fast as they can, to make way for others equally insipid, but less known, and therefore more attractive.

That this game has been most industriously played of late, and with considerable success, is evident to the shame of London audiences, who, by asserting their own judgement and dignity, should prevent the practice of kidnapping performers who might live decently in the country, to render them despicable and obnoxious in the capital.

There is one circumstance of power which we apprehend contributes to render the situation of our patentees rather uneasy to themselves, as well as prejudicial to genius; we mean the reception or rejection of new pieces; we lay it down as a positive rule that, in duty to the public, each house, if furnished with so many should produce six new plays, and as many after pieces every winter; if so many are not furnished and approved, they cannot be expected from the managers; but if they *are* produced, no Mother Shiptons, no Jubilees---mere custards of folly, should be served up such a multitude of successive nights; such an opening would give every dramatic writer a fair chance; and that intrinsic merit alone should present itself without the instructive,

2 dogmatical

dogmatical recommendations of titled blockheads, which is at present almost the only path to admission; that men of liberal education might not be taxed with the mortifying necessity, of tedious and servile attendance, let a DRAMATIC SOCIETY, or INQUEST, for the examination of every new piece, that may be sent for their inspection, be established; let the authors be under the strictest obligation not to disclose themselves till the fate of their productions take place, let that be determined by a majority of votes, and let the seal of the inquest be an undeniable recommendation to the managers, whom we would so far indulge as to be constant members of the society.

Upon this plan we are confident more plays, and with much more credit, would annually appear; genius would then apply itself in a becoming manner, and seldom fail of due reward.

That we may not seem too hard upon managers, we cannot avoid observing that the third and sixth night, with the advantage of Printing, must be a very adequate reward for any play, supposing it to cost the author twelve months application; and if any production of that kind takes more than half the time, we are ready to believe it will prove laborious, and unpleasing.

As to dresses and scenery, those indispensable paraphernalia, they have been extremely well attended to, and elegantly supplied for the last seven years, in so much that we may truly say the stage has proportionally improved in decorations, as it has declined in acting merit; it is now for the most part splendidly insipid; we have the robes and processions of tragedy, but want her spirit; how just an application

tion in this sense, may be made from Ophelia "*seeing what we have seen, seeing what we see.*"

It was certainly well suggested by Mr. FOOTE, in his occasional prologue, that "*Taylors are deemed the only poets now*" and if we add that carpenters are the chief actors for bringing money, we shall not exaggerate much, but this will ever be the case till public spirit throws just and necessary contempt upon such frippery exhibitions as nature and reason mutually blush at; nor will such impositions be easily suppressed till avarice is alarmed and frightened in her sordid den behind the curtain, by the tremendous and irresistible voice of public clamour.



A SUMMARY

A

SUMMARY VIEW

OF THE

Most Known DRAMATIC WRITERS.

HAVING offered some hints to abate that rancorous prejudice which attacks the character of a player; that illiberal censure which stigmatizes the profession, as not only obnoxious to moral rectitude, but contemptible in society; it becomes a duty to offer our readers some remarks upon theatrical authors, with this reserve, that our criticisms upon them must rather be general than particular.

Mr. POPE has stiled an honest man the noblest work of God. This is perhaps an exaggerated compliment to the human species, especially if, as the Christian faith directs, we allow the existence of beings much more refined, much nearer the purity of absolute perfection, than we in a state of frail mortality can come; in the same light we consider Mr. ADDISON's assertion, that a good tragedy

is the noblest work of man. However thus much advantage we may derive from his opinion, that a play founded on virtuous principles is a valuable acquisition, and that the author of it may be deemed an ornament as well as a friend to his country.

The moral rectitude of Mr. ADDISON never has been called in question, his writings are all chaste and instructive; his circumstances were independent of emoluments as an author, therefore we may very justly infer, that his approbation of the stage proceeded from cool, disinterested, impartial, conviction; that it was worthy countenance, not merely as an amusement, but as a school of improvement; that it has been prostituted to very unworthy views by some men of great abilities, must be acknowledged, so has the pulpit by sordid sceptics, and wild enthusiasts; so have the courts of justice by venal judges, and corrupt practitioners; in short plays and players may reduce their plea of reputation to one single obvious point, where reason readily and powerfully supports their cause; if in common, with every circumstance and station of life they manifest an alloy, sure they cannot merit general condemnation for not being totally free from blame.

It is very remarkable, that not one of the hot-mouthed preachers, or bedlamite authors who have declaimed and wrote against the stage, ever offered more than a diffuse, unsupported, malevolent charge, that the institution is diabolical; if they are possessed of any arguments to make good this gloomy assertion, they take care never to let them slip into public

public view, least investigation should prove them to be the froth of fermented malice.

It is in vain to contend any point with wretches whom avaricious views, or obstinate ignorance, fortify against all approaches of reason; animals in the human shape, who cover wolfish hearts with the inoffensive semblance of sheep, who endeavour to render the paternal dispensations of providence ineffectual; who change the comfortable smiles of religion into the most mortifying frowns; who pretend that misery here is the safest road to happiness hereafter; who would break the spirit, and restrain the faculties of man, under pretence of rectifying his mind; who would upon the whole prevent or suppress the most laudable, and essential ordinations of society, to make the great and multitudinous stage of nature, one deplorable, unvarying scene of slumbering insipidity, frenzied discontent, or tragic exhibition.

The mimic stage derives from such foes much more credit than prejudice; wherefore to their own dulness, hypocrisy, or avarice, we leave them, not forgetting in Christian charity, to wish every pitiable or detestable character, a speedy and entire reformation.

SHAKESPEARE, who has by general consent, been stiled father of the English drama, first presents himself; his characteristics in tragedy are supporting and pursuing all the passions which agitate, adorn, or disgrace human nature to their utmost extent; a strict and most praiseworthy adherence to uniformity of character, both in conduct and language; he never sinks an elevated personage in dialogue, nor raises a low one by improper dignity of phrase;

variety and strong contrasts seem always in his view, he well knew the force of his own genius and sought subjects suitable; his choice of historical plots was highly judicious, as a more extensive field than any other, a field in which scarce any other author has ranged, with success, except BANKES, whose well chosen subjects made the worst writing that ever escaped poetical pen bearable.

Though we should have been sorry to perceive the trammels of criticism, on SHAKESPEARE'S fire-eyed Pegasus, yet we rather wish that he had not shown so total a contempt for probable regularity; he certainly might have observed some bounds, without any prejudice to his imagination, and we particularly lament those disgusting scraps of fashionable buffoonery which occur in, and disgrace, many of his best pieces: in comedy we find him fanciful and pleasant, his characters are rich and pleasing, though obsolete; his plots in general good, though irregular, most of his catastrophes satisfactory; his conversation nervous and pointed, but in some places rather stiff; faults frequently occur, but they are hid amidst a blaze of beauties; and it may be truly said of this author, that criticism reluctantly stumbles upon his blemishes, having so rich a fund for praise and admiration.

DRYDEN, as a tragic writer, encouraged bombast ideas and pomposity of versification, aiming more at the marvellous than just pictures of nature; however his *ALL for LOVE* has merit, and there are some masterly strokes in the character of Dorax, in *DON SEBASTION*; in those scenes of *ŒDIPUS*, said to be written by him, we discover great merit, and may justly conclude, that his plays in rhyme
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were the effect of a servile compliance with false taste, occasioned by very unfavourable circumstances, which perverted his genius, and enslaved his opinion; indeed his principles appeared, upon every occasion, subservient to pecuniary advantage.

Notwithstanding there are some well imagined whimsical characters in his comic writings, the detestable licentiousness with which they are loaded, renders them obnoxious, and we could wish them sunk in oblivion; a dissolute court will ever taint public entertainments, as well as private conduct; and it seems DRYDEN's peculiar misfortune to have written in a reign when vice was patronized by the highest authority; a reign which wanted the honest indignation and keen satire of a JUVENAL to chastize and expose its infamy.

BEN JOHNSON, though ranked so high in literary fame, does not appear to us deserving of so honourable a station; his tragedies are the most stiff, uncouth, laborious, unaffecting, productions we know, spun out to an intolerable length, by tedious, unessential, declamatory passages, translated from the classics; three of his comedies have justly received the stamp of general approbation; VOLPONE, SILENT WOMAN, and EVERY MAN in his HUMOUR; yet even in these nature seems rather caricatur'd, and there are many blamable intrusions upon delicacy of idea and expression; the remainder of his works might have dubbed any man, less lucky, with the title of a bad writer, and we are perfectly of opinion that naming him with his great cotemporary, is pairing authors as poulterers do rabbits, a fat and a lean one.

OTWAY

OTWAY was peculiarly happy in a full and unrivalled possession of the true Pathos; in his two plays of VENICE PRESERVED and the ORPHAN, the audience are never left to a state of indifference, but tied down by a succession of interesting strokes to a most feeling, sympathetic attention; his versification is the most unaffected and natural for dialogue of any we know; but the whole of his reputation should rest upon the two pieces we have mentioned; his other productions, of the serious cast, are very meagre, and his comedies not only poor, but infamous; it seems to have been a settled maxim with OTWAY, to show the most unfavourable pictures of human life, yet, by a kind of bewitching power, he annexes pity to the distress of such characters as should rather fall under contempt.

ROWE deserves the praise of being chaste, moral, and pathetic; he has evidently instruction constantly in view; his merit, save one unfortunate attempt upon comedy, is more uniform than that of any other writer; it is true he does not rise within many degrees of SHAKESPEARE's peculiar elevation, but at the same time, he never sinks so low, and it is not an exaggerated compliment to say of him, as LORD LITTLETON has done of THOMPSON, that he never wrote a line which, dying, he might wish to blot; his FAIR PENITENT and JANE SHORE, keep the stage most constantly, though we think his TAMERLANE rather superior, and his AMBITIOUS STEP MOTHER equal to either; one, and only one, fault we find with this amiable author, which is, making all his characters speak in exactly the same stile, furnishing them with too rich, too fanciful a strain

strain of expression, and frequently making the poet take place of the character.

LEE possessed great fire of imagination and much tenderness; but we need no other information than perusal of his pieces to know that his brain was frenzied; THEODOSIUS notwithstanding many strange extravagancies, is sufficient to fix his claim to poetical merit.

The muses bestowed smiles of peculiar favour on Mr. ADDISON, but his poem of CATO hardly gives him title to the stile of a dramatic author; if he was really writer of that pleasing, natural, simple, comedy, the DRUMMER, we readily admit him, and wish he had favoured the world with more productions of a similar kind.

THOMPSON seems to have been much better calculated for easy poetry than theatrical composition; yet his plays strongly manifest a knowledge of nature, a moral delicacy of judgment, and great strength of expression; but they are wanting in point of business, incidents are too thinly scattered, and his scenes frequently fall from their length, he does not appear to have known, or considered, the effect of representation, and criticism may easily discover that he wrote more for the closet than the stage.

From all we can collect of this respectable author, we may conclude that he was so tenacious of a virtuous tendency, he never could have been prevailed upon to flatter depraved taste, as DRYDEN did.

We recollect a circumstance in his life, which, though foreign to our plan, must be pleasing to every generous mind; a very strict cordial intimacy subsisted

subsisted between THOMPSON and QUIN, the former, who was often in low circumstances, invited his friend to dine with him at Kew, where he then lived; after the hospitable repast was over, the author, who was as remarkable for modesty as genius, with much hesitation told the player he wanted fifty pounds, and would esteem the loan of that sum as a great favour. QUIN, with his usual roughness, replied, look ye JEMMY THOMPSON, this is an odd invitation of yours; you have given me a good dinner, and I have done it justice, but did not think I was to pay so confounded dear for it; this brutal rebuff silenced the diffident bard, and not a syllable more was then mentioned of the matter.

Next morning THOMPSON received a letter from his churlish friend to this effect, JEMMY QUIN informs JEMMY THOMPSON that he hates the word *lend*, but if the inclosed bit of paper is of any use, shall be happy: here a bank note for two hundred pounds unfolded itself, and in a postscript were these words; my wine merchant will this day send you a hogshead of his best claret, which I will come and help you to demolish, as often as health, leisure, and inclination, will permit; there was a considerable share of oddity in this action, but it is better to do good, even ungraciously, than to neglect drooping, oppressed, merit; and it is no small addition to Mr. QUIN's character, that he afterwards reproved his friend sharply for making the matter known.

DOUGLASS HOME, we title this author from his first piece, because not one he has written since possesses any tolerable degree of dramatic merit; he enjoys some share of genius; his descriptions are
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in general picturesque, and sometimes pathetic; but upon the whole, he traces the more powerful passions languidly; his characters want variety, his plots are barren, and his catastrophes very imperfect; his language is sufficiently chaste and flowing, but wants vigour, and many scenes drag through a dull uninteresting sameness; church persecution has made many nations bleed in every age; however the austere presbytery of Scotland forced this gentleman's pen and circumstances into a situation which they could never have reached without such illiberal oppression; it may be truly said this bard, like parsley, has vegetated the better for being trod upon, and though we cannot admit, yet we cordially congratulate him on his peculiar success.

Dr. BROWN, author of *BARBAROSSA*, rose in our opinion above the last mentioned gentleman, yet his Pegasus was animated by false fire, and often puts us in mind of the flying horse which seems ready for the most rapid motion, yet always stands still: It is his first play, also seems to have exhausted all the dramatic merit he possessed, though Mr. GARRICK's powerful merit forced *ATHELSTAN* on the town for some nights; it certainly is a most incongruous, wretched, piece of stuff: The Doctor was much more of a prose writer than a poet.

MOORE, author of the *Fables for the fair sex*, has left us one tragedy, which, being written in an unusual style, and upon a very unfashionable subject, does not preserve the station it has a right to claim; for we are bold to pronounce it a most striking and instructive picture of nature, especially as she is depraved in Great Britain at present, though perhaps he has tinctured his piece towards

the latter end with too high a colouring of horror.

The GAMESTER certainly attacks one of the most pernicious national vices that can prevail, and the familiar prose dialogue renders it more intelligible to all degrees of an audience: Some critics seemed to think it lost consequence and politeness for want of being expressed in measured syllables. Indeed it is no wonder that the boxes in general should be afraid to view the horrid consequences of transactions they themselves are so devoted to, and so deeply involved in; however, we give the author great praise for all and every part of this play; in the comic stile he was delicate and spirited; his aim in writing seemed to center in the production of something useful, therefore his deficiencies, which were but slight, should not be mentioned.

MURPHY, by picking up materials from the French and some of our own writers, has manufactured several praiseworthy pieces in both the serious and gay; the latter seems most his talent, but he has so excellent a knack of pilfering, that no author ever seemed to maintain a greater equality in the contrast stiles; without one grain of originality he has pieced together several plays that must please, by a very extensive knowledge of theatrical action, and its effects; he has composed tragedy without poetry, unless strained and multiplied metaphors deserve the name, and comedy without wit; he ranks well amongst living authors, but let the dead call out for their own, and like the bird with borrowed feathers you would soon perceive him in a state of poetical nakedness,

HOOLE,

HOOLE, a successful translator, who has to his own considerable emolument plundered Metastasio of two flimsy morsels, which are well enough calculated to slip down and relish with palled appetites, but have nothing in them truly substantial for vigorous critical digestion; they seem made for the actors who are too weak to bear up a heavier task, and the actors appear calculated for them, which greater abilities could make nothing of; so far a happy junction: But what must taste, and those fine feelings we have had gratified, exclaim when they are forced to be patient with such acting, and such composition.

We now come to authors who have chiefly professed themselves votaries of the comic muse, and first mention CONGREVE, not only in point of time, but, as we think, of merit; no man who ever wrote for the stage has shewn more capital, more correct, or more pleasing delineations of life; his characters are beautifully contrasted, his language pointed, his wit brilliant, his plots amazingly regular and pleasingly intricate, his scenes variegated, and his disposition of the whole masterly; two faults, one of a very heavy nature, countervail his extensive merit, his flashes of wit are too frequent, often too much for the person who utters them, his dialogue rather profuse, and a most abominable vein of licentiousness runs through the whole; virtue reluctantly peeps in, while vice with brazen front bolts forward unblushing, unrestrained: Had this author written under the commendable restrictions of this age, his luxuriousest would have been brought within better bounds. His pieces must give great pleasure either in action or perusal, but

are like the sweet scented rose, with prickles beneath, which while it gratifies one sense wounds another; it is with reluctance we pronounce the sentence of moral justice which condemns his four comedies to oblivion, as pernicious; but we doom his tragedy to contempt, with the full satisfaction of critical propriety.

FARQUHAR is not so rich, but more natural than CONGREVE, his plots are not so laboured and correct, yet are full as agreeable; his characters are all well selected from the volume of life, pleasingly grouped, and well disposed of at the catastrophes; some scenes are rather improbable, as Tom Errand's getting into Lady Lurewell's chamber and stripping before her; besides some others which we could point out; however they are introduced with a degree of whim, which renders them excusable; no doubt the STRATAGEM and RECRUITING OFFICER are far before any other production of his, yet the remainder are not without very great unforced pleasantry.

CIBBER, the laurelled CIBBER, though he had no claim even to the smallest sprig of a poetical tree, has nevertheless by way of atonement, for his doleful birth day odes, furnished the stage with some agreeable pieces; there is a vivacity and pertness discoverable peculiar to himself; his comedies are not very original, yet are they in general very laughable; they had the essential support of most capital acting at their first appearance; else we think they might have sunk into the Lethean stream; the much boasted CAARELESS HUSBAND is, no doubt, remarkable for elegance of dialogue and character; yet it is a very drowsy exhibition.

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By what we have heard of the laureat's concern in the PROVOKED HUSBAND and CONSCIOUS LOVERS, we are inclined to allow him the praise of an able helpmate; we also think he stole judiciously, and knew the stage so intimately, that he could not fail much in dramatic compilation; but as to natural genius, look at all his tragical attempts, except RICHARD the THIRD, and see what deplorable spectacles; however he was a manager, a first rate actor, had the ever blooming wreath, good salaries, and an annual butt of sack, with which marks of distinction let him rest in peace, while we who survive consider him as much more fortunate than deserving, a circumstance not tied down to any age or clime.

VANBRUGH, as an artichect, was accused of having a very phlegmatic taste; in writing he appears to possess exactly the contrast; spirit, propriety, and character; he seems to have known life well, and has in his dramatic compositions made good use of that knowledge; his language is free, his scenes well disposed, incidents pleasant, and plots regular; his play of the PROVOKED WIFE, notwithstanding a strong vein of humour, is scandalously licentious, even as it is now performed; how much more so when he adopted the character of a clergyman for rioting, beating the watch, &c. we are surprized, however great Mr. GARRICK may be in Sir John Brute, that he contributes to keep alive so censurable a piece; its merits are, or ought to be, totally sunk into its infamy.

There is a gross error in character which this author in particular seems fond of, and many have followed him; that is making Spanish servants smart,

smart, humourous, fellows; so very free with their masters as even to jest upon their most serious concerns; now however such an idea may have been suggested even by national novel writers yet certain it is that the Spanish pride, for which the Dons in particular are so very remarkable, would never suffer such instances of pert familiarity from their own domestics, whom they consider as animals of a quite different, nay, a despicable species; there is nothing more incumbent upon authors than distinguishing the different spheres of life properly, and giving each a language suitable to his station.

Mrs. CENTLIVRE had a pretty, whimsical talent of composition, and some originality; but her productions are more of froth than solidity; they may divert but cannot improve, and often, for want of decency, shame a female pen.

SOUTHERNE, as a tragic writer, made very powerful attacks upon the tender passions, and is remarkably free in his versification; his comedy is not without spirit, humour, and character; but the infectious taste of Charles's reign, rendered it gross enough for the entertainment of a brothel.

KELLY, as a grave chaste writer deserves praise, but we cannot perceive any marks of strong genius, or lively conception; the spirit of party has been most illiberally prejudicial to this gentleman, but we hope it will pursue him no further.

BICKERSTAFF, this author, with great propriety, we may call the *dramatic cobbler*; for he, figuratively speaking, patches, soles, and heel pieces very well, though he cannot make a new piece of work; he should never attempt any thing out of the Opera stile, as well adapted music may soften many errors;

his

his sentiments are trite, his characters common, and his language most shamefully incorrect; his last piece had an unhappy title *'Tis well its no worse*; a critical wag, justly observed that it was a misnomer, for it should have been called, *it cannot be worse*; the conclusive lines spoken by Mr. KING, were such an instance of deficiency both in rhyme, and reason, as scarcely was ever offered before to an audience; had Mr. DIBDIN composed them, perhaps the harmonical repetitions, for which his inimitable music is so remarkable, might have melted nonsense into captivating sound; what are CONGREVE, FARQUHAR, HANDEL, ARNE, or ARNOLD, to this matchless author, and as matchless composer.

CUMBERLAND, a most fortunate jumbler of incidents; who hap hazard, throws them together, disdaining probability, and lets them succeed each other as they may; an author who had modesty enough, in his admirable prologue to the BROTHERS, to accuse all authors of plagiarism, yet is himself made up of nothing else; no writer ever more glaringly verified SOLOMON's remark, that there is nothing new under the sun, however he seems to have got possession of the town, and we are in some measure glad of it; as perhaps he may be incited to amendment; besides it is better even the shadow of merit should meet with success, than any portion of it go unrewarded.

GARRICK has employed his pen rather extensively, and if he had let alone at least two thirds of his Prologues we should gladly have allowed him a better place as an author than we can do; he has introduced so much of the ludicrous, and played

so repeatedly on the same ideas, that criticism, though it may be forced to laugh, must be much offended. In one he stiles himself a Prologue-smith, we wish he had wrought up more steel, and rejected much of the dross he has forged into rhyme; when the advantages of speaking are withdrawn, we fear they will not be deemed any addition to the writer's name. POPE's to Cato, and several of DRYDEN's, will last in the estimation of sound taste, as long as such pieces are read.

Thus much our impartiality obliges us to say at the same time, we most gladly allow this gentleman warm praise for his alterations, and judicious amendments of several plays, besides the production of some very pleasing originals; his perfect knowledge of the stage makes him master of disposition; he has spirit and correctness, but seems, in our idea, much better supplied with taste than genius, with humour than wit: we see him prefixed, in a kind of poetical partnership, to the CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE; we know not what part he had in that comedy, but readily admit that the composition does him and Mr. COLMAN great credit.

FOOTE, this writer we stile the dramatic noun substantive, who stands entirely upon his own bottom; whose peculiarity of genius, strength of judgment, knowledge of life, selection of characters, application of satire, vivacity of sentiment, and terseness of dialogue, place him distinct from any other writer, past and present. There is one point worth observing, which is, that though he often appears negligent in working up his catastrophe, yet he studiously, and in the most agreeable manner, impresses moral inferences upon such of his audience

ence as chuse to think; and those who only come to laugh, receive no taint from vitiated ideas. The charge of personal severity that has been levelled against him, must, upon a moment's consideration, fall to the ground; for if there are such knaves, fools, hypocrites, and coxcombs, as he presents to public view, there is no doubt but such are fit objects of satire, and ought to feel her keenest lash.

COLMAN, as we called the last mentioned author a noun substantive, we are induced to stile this gentleman a noun adjective; for by his productions, ever since he has separated from Mr. GARRICK, we receive melancholy proofs that he cannot stand alone. His JEALOUS WIFE, no doubt, gives him claim to a very honourable station in the dramatic list, but we have great reason to apprehend he had some powerful assistance in composing that play; however, we imagine, that sensible of his own intellectual decay, or natural weakness, he has shrewdly appealed to the assistance of pantomime, and turned his pen into a wooden sword, for the patch coat conjuror. Mercy deliver us! what a transition for even common sense to make, unless urged by the most pressing necessity? how would JOHNNY RICH exult, take snuff, and stroke his cats, were he alive again, to see an author sacrificed at the shrine of speechless mummery, before which he had so many years prostrated his empty noddle? how would he rejoice to see the Nine Muses swallowed up by MOTHER SHIPTON, as greedily as the Dragon of Wantly devoured houses and churches? would the voracious old lady had been buried in a real Yorkshire coal-pit, never to have appeared again,

rather than have metamorphosed our pretty little managerical play-wright, into a headless bantling of her's.

Though last, not least in love, WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, Esq; come forth, the verdant wreath fresh nodding on thy brows; rest birth-day odes, they are no objects for us; indeed, we read them not, therefore cannot say but the sack, or its equivalent, may be well earned. As a dramatist, this gentleman is as much upon the medium as any writer we know; his tragic strains will never make any body cry, nor will his comic ones ever raise a laugh; however, though he cannot reach absolute praise, he escapes positive blame. His sentiments are just and commendable, his dialogue polished, but a dreadful soporific languor drowns over the whole, throwing both auditors and readers into a poppean lethargy. His last Trip, that to Scotland we mean, was unluckily imagined; there could not be a worse clime for the production of humour. Thus we take leave of authors, and now proceed to the last point of investigation, their public agents, the performers.



THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION

AND

P E R F O R M E R S.

TO give a just delineation of nature for the stage, either in composition or action, claims very peculiar and powerful talents ; wherefore it is more a matter of surprize, that so many should arrive at decency in both, than that so few should attain excellence in either. Of the former, we have already spoken as far as our plan seemed to admit ; of the latter, we shall now deliver our sentiments on the same principle, with unchecked freedom, and we hope with some propriety.

Mimic representation of the incidents and characters which fill up this great stage of life would be almost an unfurmoutable difficulty, if every spectator was a competent judge of the several classes ; but criticism being for the most part confined to one sphere, by individuals, though feelings are pretty general, false colouring and disproportion often go down. We remember the circumstance, several years since, of an intelligent countryman, who was carried to see the STRATAGEM, in which our

English Roscius was to do Archer. The persons who accompanied this natural critic, had previously given this great actor his due praise ; however, they left the rustic to find him out. His sensations being properly operated upon, he discovered, that brother Martin was a woundy comical blade, and gave him, as well as Scrub, a hearty tribute of laughter ; but being told it was Garrick, he would not give credit, because, said he, a *great* man would never wear a livery ; however, in the last act, where Archer was dressed like a gay and blooming bridegroom, he readily admitted the truth. From this and a multitude of instances which might be advanced, it is demonstrable, that though nature has strings of sympathetic unison, when judiciously touched, yet her feelings are often checked or perverted by external prejudices, wherein the eye supercedes the heart.

It is an odd remark, but it may be fully justified, that the blind in general are much better judges of tones than those who see ; that the dumb and deaf are the ablest judges of action ; and the reason obviously is, their being confined to the perception of a single sense.

Theatrical representation should undoubtedly be considered and conducted as the water colour painting of life ; for, as oil scenes, though finished by the most accomplished masters, would melt away to an undistinguishable glare of sameness by the rays of an artificial light, so, in the same situation, animated characters must be sustained with more forceable strokes than we meet in real life ; but then those strokes should be tempered so to the distance, that

to an audience they may seem no stronger nor fainter.

The natural mode of exhibiting tragedy, and indeed comedy also, no doubt, owes its rise to Mr. Garrick; for, before him, it is agreed on all hands, that not only blank verse was swelled to a most disgusting monotonous pomposity, but even common prose dialogue was versified by utterance. It may seem strange, but we aver it to be true, that Mr. Delane, who had many fine requisites for a great actor, used to tell Boniface "I have heard your town of Litchfield much commended for its ale," in as consequential a manner, and as regular a cadence, as he used in Pyrrhus, when replying to the embassy of Orestes.

We have one capital living instance of what is called the old way, we mean Mr. Wignell, of Covent Garden, who is, to borrow from the title of Tom Thumb, the most tragical tragedian that ever tragedized on any stage. We heartily wish, to shew what nature in representation is, and what she is not, and also to prove that the general approbation of Mr. Garrick's mode is not founded upon fashionable acquiescence, that the aforesaid gentlemen were to play Jaffier and Pierre, or Dumont and Hastings, in contrast, then would arise a conviction in favour of propriety, which must impress the most rusticated observation; however, Mr. Wignell may certainly claim nature at second hand, since custom has so far wrought upon him, that he is the same off as on the stage; and always, in either case, appears no other than himself.

In stage oratory there is amazing variation, and great part of this depends upon the performer's
happy

happy conception. We cannot enter minutely into a subject, which, properly discussed, would fill a volume; therefore, only some general outlines can be offered. All unimpassioned declamation should be delivered in a full, distinct, level, tone of voice, so modulated as justly to mark the cadences, according to the stops: all exclamations, whether of grief or rapture, violence of rage, or climaxes of surprise, should be expressed by upper notes; and all passages of gloomy rage, despair, revenge, &c. by the lower. In point of emphasis there is a taste as well as propriety; the former of which arises only from a thorough knowledge of the author, and a refined ear; the latter, by itself, will ever appear stiff and mechanical. There may be instances where superior judgment may assist inferior, respecting a difficult passage; but marking every emphasis in a performer's part, as we have heard of the late Mrs. Ward, and some others, is enslaving ideas wretchedly, reducing the performer to almost the state of wood and wire; leading-string actors and actresses may be passable, but can never be great. There is one remarkable peculiarity which we are inclined to censure highly, yet modishly adopted on the stage at present, particularly at Covent Garden: a kind of unessential emphasis hunting, that lays powerful stress upon words which by no means require it, lifting up the conclusive word of a period, which most erroneously gives force, not only to persons but particles, almost wherever they are met *by, my, the, you, thou, thy, &c.* we wish this was so reformed as to observe where antithesis, which chiefly governs the emphasis of these and such like

like parts of speech, authorizes additional force of expression.

Breaks and pauses, such as occur in *HAMLET*, *LEAR*, *MACBETH*, and other plays of Shakespeare, are very difficult to execute happily. This is a point very obvious, as they never fail, when well supported, to give warm and general approbation; they not only give variation to the voice, but also an agreeable transition to the features.

Stage deportment should be free, and void of all affectation; solemnity of step, by breaking half way, the old mode, or dragging the hind foot with a kind of slide, are both unmeaning and ungraceful; stooping, unless where necessary, maims a figure much, and displeases the observing eye; turning too often from the person spoken to, for sake of displaying figure, by traversing the stage, is a breach of decorum, not only inconsistent with civility but reason; and looking from the object of conversation, to take a view of the audience, or, as we have too often seen, to salute an acquaintance, is reprehensible to the last degree, disrespectful both to the actor on the stage, and to the public; speaking or not, a performer should never lose sight of character, yet many we have viewed waking as it were from a reverie just when alarmed by their cue.

As action is the life of public speaking, we think it should be most industriously cultivated, and that rather by a studious, rational, enquiry into motions of ease, grace, and explanation, than the reflection of a looking-glass. Shakespeare's general rule, let the action suit the words, the words the action, is concise, comprehensive, and just; as is also his interdiction against sawing the air. We think that a

set of drawing, to shew all the variations of action in the different situations of character, would be highly useful, not only a rich subject for describing all the passions of the features, but all the positions of the body; we wish Mr. Garrick to be the subject of such a design, for such sized prints as would come at a price suitable to general purchase; but it is a matter of too great fatigue to be ever hoped for; however those capital pieces, in which we have seen his excellence described, justify our wish.

Attitudes, we mean those of a picturesque nature, should never be obtruded upon unimportant passages; a constant display of such is the peculiar province of Pantomime; but when they are called for, they should be executed with all spirit and exactness; the extent of figure being consulted; for what may appear graceful in a large, may be the contrary in a small one, and what may well suit the latter, will often render the former puppet like.

If there is a just feeling, all movements of the features will be just, although more strongly described in some than in others; but the disposition of body and limbs may yet be very awkward and unpleasing; which is frequently verified by country actors, and sometimes by those in town; it is certain that those who understand action least use it most; willing to do something clever they undo, and misapply most egregiously; we remember amidst a multitude of instances, an actor well received in Jaffier, who speaking this line, "how I could pull thee down into my heart;" so far anticipated propriety of motion, as to clap his hand to his breast at the

word *pull*, and throw it from him at the word *heart*.

Mr. Barry has often offended us, with clasping his hands five or six times in a speech of as many lines; this is a proper, and becoming action upon many occasions, but, too often used, disgusts: Mr. Palmer imitates this particular fault, with great industry; upon the whole it is much to be lamented by all admirers of the drama, that performers don't make themselves better acquainted with different stations in life; that they don't rather study characters than gallantry and dissipation; that they don't collect and lay down for themselves some rules, not play such a precarious game of hazard, right and wrong, as they do now; which occasions them to commit ten faults for the display of one beauty; ask three fourths of them, why they do so, and so, the reply is, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Barry, Mrs. Yates, or Mrs. Barry, do so; let me ask those complaisant, cloying imitators, why they don't get the identical dresses of those gentlemen and ladies they so implicitly follow; the garments without taking measure, will probably fit them as well as the modes they assume; for shame sons and daughters of Thespis, search into, and improve, your own talents, capability is not so much wanting at present as originality; work for that jewel, and you'll obtain reward; do not all old men of Drury Lane hobble miserably after Mr. Garrick's Lear, nor young men of Covent Garden monotonize after Mr. Smith's every thing.

In the course of this work we have often experienced and lamented what we foresaw at first, the unavoidable necessity of multiplied repetitions; so

many similar circumstances relative to both performers and plays, that we have found ourselves deprived of language to express our ideas differently; this however we hope will find excuse and we shall go forward without further mention of an inconvenience inseparable from the undertaking.

Mr. Garrick, whom we are to consider merely as an actor, is indebted to nature for an almost matchless significance of feature, enlivened with eyes peculiarly brilliant; from an amazing flexibility of countenance, he can express the most contrast feelings; simplicity, mirth, rage, grief, despair, and horror, with nearly equal excellence; hence his Abel Drugger, Benedick, Ranger, Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, and several other characters, have no equal, possibly never had; what may lie in the womb of time we know not, but think it would not be a very extravagant prophecy, to set him up against any future excellencies taken in a general view; great, no doubt, he is in both departments, the sock and buskin; however, though that eminent genius, Sir Joshua Reynolds, has placed him equally between both, we have no scruple to pronounce him most conspicuous in the latter; in light scenes he exhilarates, 'tis true, in a very peculiar manner; but in the graver and more impassioned ones, he leads the heart captive as he pleases, and rouses feelings of a much more important, difficult, nature, than can arise from comedy; with her he is very pleasingly sportive, but with her sister astonishingly powerful.

His peculiar excellencies are, an harmonious, distinct, voluble, and extensive voice; without any unnatural snaps, the last word of all his periods, is

as intelligible as the loudest; in all sudden transitions his correctness, force, and judgment, are scarcely to be described; in his soliloquies he happily avoids that absurd method of speaking solitary meditation to the audience; he appears really alone.

His defects, for every light has its shade; is shortness of figure, which however by art he evades, as much as possible, by not only disposing it to the greatest advantage, but also by taking care to shift situations so often, that the eye can hardly have time to find out, and dwell upon the defect; though graceful in motion, and very much so in attitude, he never could picture dignity, nor attain what is called the fine gentleman, a character indeed too languid for his active powers; though generally correct in modulation, and almost invariably so, in expressing the sense of his author, there is a respirative drag, as if to catch breath, and some unnecessary pauses, seemingly for the same purpose, which we have often been under a necessity of silently objecting to; and the same sort of censure should have sufficed still, but that we set out with a positive resolution to be just, and having thus far maintained it, we must continue to the end.

The leading figures should be more minutely investigated than those who have less advantages; we have often regretted an adulteration of language, by changing the *e* and *i* into *u*; this gentleman, and several after him, have pronounced *stern*, *sturn*, *mirth*, *murth*, *birth*, *burth*, which is really rendering our language, already sufficiently dissonant, still more so; our English Roscius we could never admire in declamation, indeed he has kept pretty clear of it, and we heartily wish that, for sake

of his fame, Benedick, Ranger, Archer, Don Felix, or anything in that juvenile stile, may not hereafter serve to show his advance in life; it is not enough to say he is *greater* than *any body else*, in the true cordiality of heart, we form a hope, that he will not in any future season appear *less* than *himself*.

Mr. Quin found his deficiency, and retired, but rather too late by six or seven years; however what he performed in that period wanted neither freedom of figure, nor much limitation of years.

In the course of those observations we have already made upon this gentleman, we have attacked the public reputation he obtained, with asperity, but could not avoid it, as his tragedy, bating some passages in Cato, Brutus, Zanga, Tamerlane, and Bajazet, was intolerable; he often struck out a beauty, but was upon the whole so unnaturally consequential, so monotonous and heavy, that criticism recollects most part of his performance with pain, his comedy, from a cynical roughness, and where it wanted a mellow jocundity of humour, was truly pleasing, and it is scarce any exaggeration to say, we shall never see the OLD BATCHELOR, SPANISH FRYAR, PLAIN DEALER, and MASKWELL, half so ably supported.

His figure was graceful and important, his countenance open, regular, and authoritative, his eyes expressive, and his voice distinctly sonorous; but affectation of utterance hurt the latter, and false consequence of deportment often rendered a good person ridiculous; his action was often burlesque, seldom graceful, or well applied; we have mentioned this gentleman, as we shall some other deceased

deceased capital performers, because they come within our own æra, and may furnish such as never saw, or do not remember them with comparative ideas.

Mr. Barry, in the meridian of life, possessed most shewy, and agreeable externals, he could not fail to prepossess a female audience, at first sight, in his favour, and even male critics must have felt considerable recommendation from so much elegance of appearance, and harmony of countenance; his voice might justly be called, the pipe of love, and in his eyes dwelt a languishing softness which set him above all competition in soft sensations; his paternal feelings were refined and pathetic, but his declamation trifling; his climaxes unequalled, yet too frequently called upon; he often seemed at a loss how to dispose of his hands, but was, when requisite, happy in attitude; indeed his heighth, and expanse of limbs, were particularly advantageous to him in this point; in all his performance, execution seemed to rise far above judgement; we have been extremely concerned to see such a decayed remnant of what we once thought fabricated by nature with peculiar grace, crippling about this last winter, under the chill of public neglect, and the irksome pains of a shattered, enfeebled, constitution.

Look back twenty years, who would have formed an idea of this lamentable decline, or, at least, that there would have been a necessity for exposing it; however jocose Mr. Garrick, in his occasional epilogue for the theatrical fund, may be, he must have his joke in such compositions, respecting decayed actors wanting half a crown or a pot of porter; we seriously lament that any conspicuous servant

vant of the public should come to live upon charity, and are certain that no person of either sex, who has filled for twenty years, or more, a first, second, or third rate, with respect, need want such an irksome, though benevolently calculated refuge; want of œconomy is in all stations pernicious, but in none more so than the theatrical.

Mr. Sheridan, who does not come in improperly here, mounted the stage at an early period, with the advantage of a good education and natural understanding, which gives him a just title to the stile of a sensible man; he appeared too at a time when the Dublin stage was an Augean-stable of theatrical filth; no wonder any degree of merit should then be received; add to this, that he was bred in the College, which gained him countenance and protection from his fellow students; so that the public, having nothing better to regale upon, and seeing him over and over again, like those very collegians who think, from use, mutton the best eating, Mr. Sheridan became a standard dish, till the introduction of more luxurious theatrical dainties removed him to London, where he was never even fairly relished; no performer ever conceived his author better, or marked him more correctly, but his organs of delivery were so dissonant, so imperfect, his manner so studied, his person so trifling, and his action in general so extravagant, that his defects greatly out-number his merits.

It is matter of much concern that, as a performer, he had not been confined to very few parts; as the conductor of a theatre he had great requisites, spirit, knowledge, and integrity; genteel, generous, and just, to his performers; but rather unhappy in

a taint of courtly attachment, which drew on him a ruinous popular prejudice; his study of oratory rendered him more stiff and disagreeable as an actor.

We most sincerely wish he had wisely considered his own interest, and made, as he might have done, a genteel independant provision for the present and future days; he has made some little attempts in the dramatic way, as a writer, but so trifling as not to deserve mention; his treatise on education, and his lectures on elocution, do him credit, not only as an author, but as a man.

Mr. Mossop, in point of literary knowledge, and strong natural parts, stands very high in the theatrical list, nor are his public talents, in some respects, exceeded by any; his externals are not very favourable, his countenance is not exceptionable, nor yet striking; his eyes, otherwise well calculated for a stage, are injured by a nearness of sight, which occasions him often to contract and wink them; his action, by too much use of the left hand, is uncouth; his attitudes forced, and his deportment rather pedantic than graceful; his voice has power almost without end; full, harmonious and variable; his feelings are fine, and generally just, yet his enunciation is so incumbered with unnecessary multiplied emphasis, that he often appears in the painful situation of a man gasping for breath.

This gentleman has been but an unfortunate manager, and we wish for his own sake, as well as that of the English stage, which has been, and is deplorably supplied in his stile, that he had never left London; from his medium time of life he may be esteemed with all faults, the tragedy sheet anchor at present; but never let the luring jade, comedy, decoy

coy him into the circle of ridicule, or contempt, with her enticing smiles; she was not made for him, nor he for her.

Mr. Rofs! perhaps the most ungrateful son of nature that she ever produced; possessed of exceeding good requisites, save an unmeaning countenance, has by matchless neglect sunk himself almost below notice; industry and perseverance might by this time have set him foremost in public esteem, whereas we find him very little used, and less spoken of, so early, we imagine as the age of forty: his voice is pleasing and extensive, his feelings, when properly called upon, have spirit, and pathos; his person, before corpulence enlarged it, was very agreeable, his deportment and action free, his utterance easy, yet pointed and distinct; even now, if he would promise, and keep his word, to take pains with Jaffier, Castalio, Essex, &c. we should see him with much more pleasure than any other present performer; we never wish any thing more agreeable than his Lord Townly, and young Bevil *have* been.

Mr. Smith, a meritorious contrast to the preceding gentleman, recommends himself to managers and familiarizes himself to the public, by an uncommon share of assiduity; the talents he has are not spared but often through necessity, misapplied, as we have shewn in the course of our remarks; we could wish him totally devoted to genteel, sprightly comedy, as his expression and feelings never do justice to the more important passages of passion, and his declamation loses due effect from levity; we believe, not only from our own, but very extended critical opinion, that scarce any performer ever played so much, to affect the heart so
little

little; but an agreeable person, genteel carriage, engaging countenance, and a distinct, smooth, powerful, voice, though monotonous, carry him respectably.

Mr. Reddish, in point of pecuniary advantage and station, is on the stage at a very lucky time, but we cannot say so much in respect of critical fame; for though a very useful performer, he never was designed to be a great one, he ever should have been in Mr. Havard's line, and that only; his expression is not always a just comment upon his author; his feelings are not adequate to violent passions, which has occasioned us more than once to smile at his efforts in Alexander; the best character he plays of any force and variety is Edgar, level speaking seems best suited to his voice and manner, his person is manly, but neither genteel nor consequential; his tones are distinct and agreeable enough, but too limited for climaxes of material extent; we were shocked at the malevolent irony of some news paper remarks in the *Ledger* some time since, which said this gentleman, in many capital parts, was second to none but Mr. Garrick; how could he have provoked any writer to advance such an absurdity, or how could any writer, unprovoked, attempt to damn him with such false praise?

Mr. Savigny we wish not to speak of, as we are under an indispensable necessity of using Obadiah Prim's words, who, when asked what he dislikes about Sir Phillip Modelove, replies, thy person, thy manner, thy every thing; if necessity had forced this gentleman on the stage we should have lamented him sincerely, but as it is, we are rather induced to wonder at, than condemn the devotion of such

trifling requisites to theatric action; a diminutive person, without any grace, and a voice that has not one tolerable note above the level of a common conversation; there is an evident aim at, and very faint, therefore disagreeable, similitude to Mr. Garrick, that is, to his greatest deficiencies: we heard a sort of a critical pun uttered on seeing this performer in *Cyrus*, which may not be unworthy notice; if, says a wag, Mr. Savigny's razors touch a beard no better than his features, and utterance, do the passions, it must be torture to be shaved by them.

Mr. Powell, though alas! no more, must not pass unnoticed; his person was no way striking, yet of good size and proportion; his face rather vacant, but pleasing; his voice harmonious, and pathetic; his address genteel, but his action limited, and inexpressive: in old men, where his features were rendered more expressive by art, and where the feelings seemed natural to him, he perhaps never had a superior but Mr. Garrick, 'tis true he took, or rather was obliged to take, too large a field of action, and sometimes get out of his depth; but almost in every point of view, he was much better than any thing he has left behind him.

Mr. Holland, as a tragedian, made up of stiffness, dissonance, and violence, respectable in figure, and powerful in voice, both which he misused abominably; as a comedian, in the *Plain Dealer*, *Sir William Evans*, and that stile, he deserved the praise which was lavished on him in other parts that he did not do half so well: he strutted several years in Mr. Garrick's shoes, slipshod, and was, with all his faults, a great loss to the theatre, as may appear from viewing the dreadful partition of his

his characters amongst--- oh la!---in pity let us sink the names.

Mr. Aickin, we have no objection to either in respect of person, or voice, but lament his being lifted above the proper sphere, and wish he would restrain that immoderate violence which Out-Herods Herod, he is much better calculated for a second than a first light, and would be a great gainer if he exchanged some of his superfluous fire for a degree of his brother, Mr. J. Aickin's natural ease.

Mr. Bensley, if this gentleman was but half as great a favourite with the public as he is with the manager, he would be happily stationed; but very partial advantages cannot effect this; his person is slight, his features contracted and peevish, his deportment falsely consequential, his action mostly extravagant, and his voice rather harsh; we always view him most favourably in a Turkish dress, though he can never make a Turkish countenance, his features being much more of the Chinese cast.

Mr. Clarke is very respectable in appearance, and performance; he is as seldom out of his latitude as any one we know, and if he never mounts a great height, he never sinks much below a proper level, he is literally a good, chaste, actor, but sometimes rather phlegmatic.

Mr. Cauthery a tragedy school-boy; effeminate, and insipid throughout the piece: a decent Lovell, in the Clandestine Marriage, nothing further, everlastingly the same, soup for dinner, soup for supper, soup for breakfast, and so on.

Mr. Packer, and Mr. Jefferson, two useful and inoffensive performers, the latter considerably better than the former.

Mr. Hull, very capable of supporting paternal characters, with propriety, and feeling, as he has often evinced to public satisfaction; but never more so than on a late occasion, when he played Leonato, at Drury Lane; this gentleman always convinces a sensible auditor, that he thoroughly understands his author; had nature given him executive requisites equal to his judgement and assiduity, he would have been a capital pillar of the stage; what he is possessed of he exerts with judgment and modesty.

Mr. Palmer, is what may be called a handsome figure, yet greatly injured by defective carriage, particularly a most unpardonable stoop; his voice is loud, but made up rather of rumbling than of perfect tones, which he uses so lavishly in tragic strains, as to offend delicate ears; in comedy he has very pleasing talents, as witness his Lyar, Loader, Brush, &c. he has been, by the necessities of the stage, pushed rather beyond his mark, which is apt to prejudice a young performer.

Mr. Bannister, very capable of Henry the Fourth, and parts in that cast. Mr. Kniveton, a very tolerable comedian, but for tragedy, hush. Mr. Moody, the best teague that ever the stage produced, and an actor of merit in other views. Mr. Vernon, an exceeding good comic performer, though merely used as a singer, which we profess not to judge off. Mr. Dodd, the theatrical cockatoo, spirited and pleasing in the coxcomb-stile. Mr. Love, the bloody murderer of blank verse, but a good Boniface

face, Cacafo, and a respectable Falstaff; not amiss in Sir John Brute.

Mr. King, in the comic walk of acting, has for some years shewn more force, and variety, than any cotemporary; his figure is smart, easy, genteel, his countenance pleasing, his features archly expressive, his eyes spirited, and significant, his voice distinct; his utterance remarkably voluble, and his action well adapted.

Mr. Woodward, who has suffered less impair from time, than any man in public life of his standing, is amazingly great in *outré*, and whimsical, characters, far beyond competition: in the sop stle he is also himself alone; his person is genteel, his deportment pleasing, but rather too picturesque, too studied; comedy has set her seal upon his features, and laughter dwells in his eye; we have seen this gentleman lately with as much, or more, pleasure, than we did twenty years ago; his vivacity is amazing.

Mr. Yates, a very just comedian, who is seldom beholden to trick for applause; his forte we have always thought is old men, yet we admit his Sharp, and Brainworm, to be inimitable.

Mr. Shuter, a luxurious performer, who has great humour both in looks and expression, but wants chastity of character; and diligence; the former often runs him into buffoonery, the latter into imperfectness, and nonsense. Mr. Parsons has not so much fun, but more correctness. Mr. Weston, the unparalleled eldest born of simplicity, whose Dr. Last and Mawworm, must unbend the most rigid brow.

We shall conclude male performers with Mr. Foote, who, as he never has attached himself to a sphere of general action, we must merely consider in his own pieces; in which he acts with the same inimitable spirit that he writes; as his ideas and characters are truly original, so is his representation of the parts he plays; his forceable merit has been substantially proved by the amazing sums he has drawn at different periods, but particularly the last four summers successively; if any other proof was necessary, we could furnish a very strong one by offering to comparative view the impotent, disgusting, illiberal, attempts that have lately been made upon his pieces, at both houses, by some theatrical quixotes, to their own utter disgrace, and indeed that of the managers; his pointed rapidity, his peculiar significance, and his laughable transitions, supported with unbating fire, and uncommon whim, set him above all efforts of imitation; and it may be said of him not only as an author, but as an actor, that he snatches graces beyond the reach of art.

The lower members of each theatre, whom we have not mentioned, nor could not without being tedious, certainly in general deserve the compliment of being much fitter for their humble stations than the leaders are for theirs; the rank, and file, rather shame their field officers.

Mrs. Woffington had an elegant, pleasing, appearance, and great comic spirit, but there was a peculiar taint of affectation, not suitable to a real fine lady; she always seemed too conscious of her personal charms, therefore too seldom threw off self to assume character, hence arose a sameness that we could not approve; her tragedy exhibited some
strokes

strokes finely imagined, and well executed, but upon the whole, she wore the buskin with a very ill grace; she appeared to more advantage in mens cloaths, than any other female we have saw, and was not only very pleasing, but very characteristic, in that difficult undertaking, Sir Harry Wildair; she was relieved by death from the near approaching neglect of both public and private admirers; her voice was the greatest defect she laboured under.

Mrs. Cibber, was very agreeable in her person, happy in the disposition of it, more happy in a set of features uncommonly expressive, and most happy in a plaintive, mellow, powerful, voice, she had no turn at all for comedy; in grief and distraction, no idea could go beyond her execution; and her Alicia, Constance, &c. must ever be remembered with admiration; yet after all she had a relish of the old ti-tum-ti, which often gave us offence.

Mrs. Pritchard was graceful and engaging, capable of commanding not only respect but regard; her merits were very general, nearly equal both in the grave and the gay; it is not easy to conceive one and the same person so capital in Lady Macbeth, Jane Shore, Beatrice, and Catharine, she had good feelings, but blubbered in grief; her voice was rather coarse, but well modulated, and her person too corpulent, yet so well deported as to carry off its superfluity with ease; her equal will not adorn the theatre, these many years.

Mrs. Bellamy trod close on the heels of Mrs. Cibber, she had, we think, the more amiable countenance of the two, though it was not marked with so much sensibility, her person though small, was very satisfactory, and her expressions of rapture, beyond

yond any thing we have ever heard; she came somewhat nearer comedy, than her great competitor, but never deserved much praise in that stile.

Mrs. Barry has great advantage over the first, and last mentioned ladies, as being far beyond either in comedy, and not much behind them in tragedy; she is graceful, genteel, spirited, and feeling; but from a defect in her eyes, not so descriptive in countenance, as might be wished.

Mrs. Yates, in the present clouded, theatrical hemisphere, shines a constellation, but we think her merit very confined; a good person, regular but haughty features, and powerful voice, carry her well through rage, and disdain; but she is deficient in tender feelings, and hurries the forceable ones to a degree of violence, which criticism must condemn; we are sorry to differ so much from public opinion, which seems so warm in this lady's favour; she has not a trace of comedy about her.

Mrs. Abington has all the advantages of Mrs. Woffington, with more variety and more pleasantry; she is beyond a doubt our best comic actress, and fully deserves the favour she enjoys. Miss Pope has considerable merit, in smart voluble comedy, but is not totally engaging as to her person. Miss Macklin had extensive, spirited, abilities, but is on the decline. Mrs. Bulkley, and Mrs. Baddely, are both pretty women, and agreeable actresses, where nothing great is wanting. Mrs. Mattocks, a very useful actress, but rather under-acts tragedy, and over-does comedy, singing we take no notice of. Miss Catley nothing of a speaker: Mrs. Fitzgerald, very little better. Mrs. Gardner, in Mr. Foote's

Foote's pieces excellent. Mrs. Green, a very good substitute for Mrs. Clive. Mrs. Hopkins, a very bad one. Mrs. Clive, peculiarly happy in low humour; who with a most disagreeable face, and person, was always the joy of her audience, when she kept clear of any thing serious or genteel. Mrs. W. Barry, a very tolerable second Woman. Miss Miller, nothing but partial managerical favour could have produced, or supported, this Lady.

Thus the DRAMATIC CENSOR takes cordial leave of the reader, conscious of many faults, not without hopes of some merit; and wishes, that if any other work, upon this plan, and subject, should hereafter be started, there may be more subjects for praise, and fewer for censure.

We cannot dismiss this volume, without gratefully acknowledging the general encouragement with which the public have honoured our critical pursuit, and the self approbation we feel from having preserved one uniform spirit of impartiality through the whole, agreeable to our free and unbiassed judgment. As a candid review of the stage was the only motive for this undertaking, and a second edition is now preparing for the press, we take this opportunity of soliciting the assistance of the ingenious in general, in order to render the work as perfect and pleasing as possible. At the same time, we hereby promise, that whatever al-

terations we may be favoured with, if not convenient to incorporate them into the body of the work, shall, at least, appear in notes with the author's name, if required, by which the public may form a proper judgment of our performance, and easily perceive the complexion of our principles: such correspondents as favour us with any improvements, by sending their address to the publisher, shall have a set of the new edition, handsomely bound, sent to them gratis, as soon as it is published.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME,

I N D E X

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ANSWER to our late CORRESPONDENTS.

AFTER thanking A. B. and E. M. for the friendly correspondence with which the Dramatic Censor has been indulged, we declare ourselves happy in the idea of assistance; for a second edition, every remark for enrichment, or correction, shall be carefully attended to, every judicious alteration adopted, and every possible step taken to make the work complete; we lament the indisposition of our friend E. M. and are to regret that a similar impediment among ourselves, prevented this number's appearing in due time; we have at present no fixed resolution, of extending the Censor beyond the limits at first proposed, should such a design take place, timely notice will be given for correspondents; A. B. and E. M. with other friends, may rest assured we have not been so incivilly curious as to employ the least thought in finding out the real names of those persons who only sign initials.



